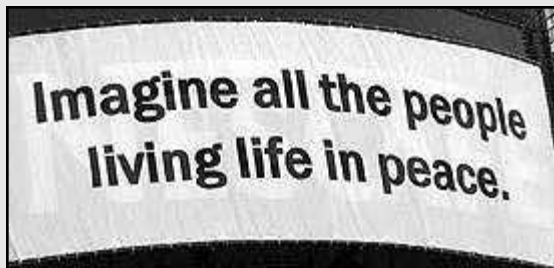


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Nº42 February 2003



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Government dishonours OA recipient

EVE VINCENT

Among the recipients of a 2003 Order of Australia is a Yankunytjatjara / Antikarinya elder, Mrs Eileen Kampakuta Brown (AM) from Coober Pedy, South Australia. Mrs Brown's order is for service to the community 'through the preservation, revival and teaching of traditional Anangu (Aboriginal) culture and as an advocate for Indigenous communities in Central Australia'.

Mrs Brown's nomination emphasised her seniority amongst Western desert Anangu communities. Her curriculum vitae detailed a sustained commitment to the protection and restoration of sacred sites; involvement in native title claims; and the protection of women's and children's rights.

Mrs Brown, we are to understand, is being duly recognised as a woman of extensive traditional cultural knowledge. It is this very cultural knowledge that has compelled Mrs Brown to lead a ten-year struggle against the federal government's proposal to dump radioactive waste in the South Australian desert. Just days before Mrs Brown became an officially 'honoured Australian', the federal government released the final Environmental Impact Statement for the waste dump project, dismissing the concerns of Mrs Brown and others.

Mrs Brown's roles as teacher and advocate are inseparable. These aspects come together in her pivotal involvement in the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta, a council comprising senior women from Kokatha, Antikarinya and Yankunytjatjara countries.

The Kungka Tjuta remain resolutely opposed to the 'remote' dumping of radioactive waste through their campaign called Irati Wanti – the poison, leave it. Mrs Brown explains her responsibility to keep on 'talking strong': 'I can't stand up on my tjina [feet] very well now but I'm still talking. My grandfather and mother looked after that land

that was their manta [earth]. Now I am talking on behalf of them so that the kids can have it behind when we leave it. My grandsons, daughters and sons.'

The Kungka Tjuta are committed to reviving and transmitting traditional cultural knowledge, stories and practices. In doing so they draw instruction from their Tjurkur, variously translated as 'Dreaming' or 'Law'. The Tjurkur tells of the Seven Sisters who travelled across the land creating it. Similarly the Kungka Tjuta have travelled tirelessly across this continent in order to protect and care for their ngura, their country.

The Irati Wanti campaign image features a defiant Mrs

hearts.' To the Kungka Tjuta the desert is not a 'remote' wasteland suitable for the storage of Australia's radioactive refuse. It is their home – intimately known, densely named and overlaid with stories, meanings, and histories. Furthermore, the desert is life-sustaining, supporting diverse plant and animal life through vast underground water sources.

The Kungka Tjuta's knowledge system then is directed towards health, life and future. They are constantly 'worrying for our kids. We've got a lot of kids growing up on the country and still coming more, grandchildren and great grandchildren. They have to have their life. On the other hand the irati, the poison, destroys life. Irati holds destructive properties, which the Kungka Tjuta know after extensive contact with nuclear interests in the region. The Irati Wanti campaign draws an insistent link between memories of 'the bomb' and opposition to the radioactive waste dump.

October 15, 2003 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first nuclear bomb detonated on the



Mrs Eileen Kampakuta Brown at Kupa Piti 2002.

PHOTO: BEN STORRIER

Just days before Mrs Brown became an officially 'honoured Australian', the federal government released the final Environmental Impact Statement for the waste dump project, dismissing the concerns of Mrs Brown and others.

Brown with her hand outstretched, signalling 'no'. A lurid desert sky stretches above her, and the flat country outline appears in black. 'Never mind our country is the desert', explain the Kungka Tjuta, 'that's where we belong. ... It's from our grandmothers and our grandfathers that we've learned about the land. This learning isn't written on paper as whitefellas' knowledge is. We carry it instead in our heads and we're talking from our

Australian mainland by the British Government with the support of the Australian Government. This is an event that Mrs Brown remembers vividly. At this time she was still walking the desert in the traditional way, when 'the smoke caught us. We got up in the morning from the tent ... We tried to open our eyes in the morning but we couldn't open them. We had red eyes and tongues and our coughing was

getting worse. We were wondering what sort of sickness we had ... we all got sick.'

With the recent release of the final EIS, 2003 is shaping up to be a historic year for the waste dump project. Accompanying the EIS was a federal government announcement of a \$300 000 're-education' budget to address the 'concerns' of the South Australian public. The waste dump faces overwhelming community opposition in South Australia, and Labor Premier Mike Rann is preparing to legislate against it.

According to the federal government's communication strategy increased awareness and knowledge about the radioactive storage facility will nullify opposition. It is unlikely to stop Mrs Brown, who says 'I've got the knowledge. ... Never mind that I don't speak English... I speak strong.' Mrs Brown will keep on

talking at a federal government that 'honours' and then ignores her, 'they don't listen. They got no ears...'

The Kungka Tjuta, I venture to suggest, don't need a 'communication budget' to make their story look good. They are, after all, award-winning teachers, however obdurate a pupil the federal government is proving. They urge all Australians to 'listen to us. ... If we take care of this country, it will take care of us'. As the world heads toward large-scale conflict and destruction, their call for reciprocity and respect is timely. Guided by the example of Mrs Brown, the Kungka Tjuta all know how important it is to simply 'take care' of their families, their community and their country.

For more information visit www.iratiwanti.org

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Seaswap – WA now a launching pad for war

DIANA MALONE

WA is now helping to prepare the biggest US Navy deployment since the Gulf war. The State and Federal Governments have put into action a 'Seaswap' program that has created a de-facto US naval base in Cockburn Sound, Western Australia, and approved US bombing of a Defence Training Area near Lancelin.

The Seaswap program began in early January with the return of the world's largest warship, USS Abraham Lincoln, and the USS Fletcher to WA waters. The Commander of the US Navy's surface forces, Vice-Admiral Timothy LaFleur, praised WA for its support in this "long, long war." Stating that, "WA had a strategic role in US military operations – by allowing the US to keep battle-ready ships in the region".

The US Navy will now use WA as a swap over point for the 7th fleet with Navy crew coming in and out of theatres of war, going straight to WA instead of US bases in San Diego or Hawaii. Thousands of US military personnel will be flown in and out of WA to meet US warships in Cockburn Sound. The Seaswap program also allows the US Navy to store its weapons and ammunition on West Australian soil, a situation that could see nuclear missiles

and warheads in bunkers on HMAS Stirling, and has invited the US Navy to practice their bombing techniques on the Lancelin coastal bombing range.

The WA State Government is promoting the plan as a

WA stands to gain little for the cost of becoming a nuclear target, playing a major role in the escalation of overseas conflicts, having its coastal heath bombed, its sound dredged and its civil liberties curtailed.

means of increasing the tourist dollar and gaining shipbuilding contracts. But the US has already said that any repairs on navy vessels in WA could only be undertaken by US based companies. The presence of



thousands of US sailors is likely to make WA nightclubs and other R&R venues prime targets for terrorist attack. The effect on tourism in WA could be quite profound. Even if we escape an

deep water channel to be dredged through Cockburn Sound so that nuclear powered aircraft carriers could come closer to the coast. This extended dredging could have a disastrous environmental impact on the local fishing industry, the beaches of Rockingham and the amenity of Cockburn Sound.

Fremantle Anti-Nuclear Group spokesperson Scott Ludlum sums up this diabolical situation beautifully:

"WA stands to gain little for the cost of becoming a nuclear target, playing a major role in the escalation of overseas conflicts, having its coastal heath bombed, its sound dredged and its civil liberties curtailed."

attack like that witnessed recently in Bali, tourists are likely to stay away in droves from areas frequented by US marines, simply through fear of terrorism.

The US navy also require a

For further reading go to
www.seaswap.org

The human cost of War

DR SUE WAREHAM

The leaders of the free and democratic world are about to unleash a war which poses grave risks, follows no logic and has very little support internationally. 'Weapons of mass destruction' will be the pretext for inflicting further mass destruction on a nation already devastated by two decades of either war, economic sanctions or both.

The human cost of the forthcoming war can only be estimated but there is every reason to believe that it will be severe. The report "Collateral Damage: the health and environmental costs of war on Iraq", which was produced by the UK medical organisation Medact and released in Australia in November by the Medical Association for Prevention of War, examined the likely costs of war, based on the known consequences of previous wars, especially the 1991 Gulf War.

It estimated that up to half a million people could die from both the direct and indirect effects of the war. In the best possible case scenario identified, the estimated death toll was 48,000 people. If the US were to launch a nuclear strike on Baghdad, the death toll could reach 4 million people. And life for the survivors would be little short of hell.

Children will be disproportionately affected, as they were in the 1991 Gulf War. During that war, Iraq's electricity generating capacity was deliberately targeted, which led to shutdowns of the water purification and sanitation systems and outbreaks of infectious illnesses to which children are particularly vulnerable. It is estimated that 70,000 children died as a result of that war. Approximately 9,000 homes were destroyed. An estimated 1.8 million refugees fled the north of Iraq and 15 to 30,000 of them died.

A recently leaked UN report headed "Likely humanitarian scenarios", and dated 10 December 2002, supports predictions of a humanitarian catastrophe in the

event of further war. It estimates that 16 of the country's 26.5 million people are totally dependent on the government monthly food ration, the distribution of which will be severely jeopardised with the likely targeting of roads, bridges and railways. Further predictions in the report are that 39% of the population will need to be provided with clean water, 5 million would require assistance with sanitation; 2 million children will require treatment for severe or moderate malnutrition; and 900,000 refugees will require assistance.

In a war rhetoric which is overflowing with ironies, the most profound irony is that, if Saddam Hussein does in fact have any biological or chemical weapons, then starting a war with him is the very worst way to address the problem. After all, wartime is when weapons tend to be used. Israel would presumably be a prime target. A nuclear response from Israel could not be ruled out.

Astonishingly our leaders, who see Iraq's alleged chemical and/or biological weapons as a threat to the whole world, appear unperturbed by the prospect of epidemics, famine and nuclear conflagration in the Middle East.

But of course the coming war is not really about weapons of mass destruction. If President Bush's concern were the existence of genocidal devices he would be fulfilling rather than violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which requires the US and the other major nuclear powers (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, who now sit



IMAGE: HEINRICH HINZE

in judgment on Iraq) to get rid of their own nuclear weapons. He would give an undertaking that the US will never (again) conduct a nuclear first strike, instead of threatening this very thing against the people of Iraq. He would be taking his own nukes off hair trigger alert so that an accidental launch is not possible.

If weapons of mass destruction were really the prime concern

people's lands and remain immune from the same ourselves. Acts of terror are likely to increase in number.

There are other ways. They require a commitment to international law and cooperation and to justice for all people. Implicit in this is the need for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction by all nations. In the Middle East there will be no peace until there is

"It estimated that up to half a million people could die from both the direct and indirect effects of the war."

of the Australian Government, Prime Minister Howard would have loudly and unequivocally condemned US threats of a nuclear strike against 'rogue states'.

Nor can the Australian Government credibly claim that our participation in an attack on Iraq is in our own best interests. The Australian people are certainly not convinced of that. Increasingly there appears an intuitive understanding that we cannot continue to support bombing of other peo-

a just settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For the Iraqi people, a commitment to justice requires the lifting of the economic sanctions which have driven them further into the control of one of the world's most malevolent criminals.

To go back a step. If we are to reduce the threats posed by dictators who show callous disregard for human life, we must avoid supplying such dictators with billions of dollars worth of military hard-

ware and technology in the first place, especially when we know the largesse is being used to gas people in large numbers.

The coming weeks, and the response of the UN Security Council to the weapons inspectors' report, will determine whether President Bush's war will be 'legal' or 'illegal'. We should however be under no illusion that a 'legal' war is necessarily a just or wise war. In any event, unless the Security Council's actions are truly in accordance with the purpose of the United Nations, whose Charter commences "We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...", then it will be corrupted as no more than a tool of its most powerful member.

With or without Security Council authorisation, the human costs of war on Iraq will be profound. If the human costs are not our paramount concern, then the issue of weapons of mass destruction is a contemptible distraction from another, unspoken, agenda.

Dr Sue Wareham is a member of the Medical Association for Prevention of War.

US govt ignorant to post-war consequences

JASON BRAYSHAW

British newspaper The Sunday Express has reported that a US-led attack on Iraq will start on midnight February 21. A media release issued by Associated Press stated that although The Sunday Express gave no source for its report, the time and date was announced by President George W. Bush to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in a telephone call over Christmas.

Despite no official date being formally announced, the US seems poised for a military attack. The outcome concerning a 'post-war Iraq' has been seriously neglected.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has for the first time admitted the security of energy sources are a priority of British Foreign Policy, during a meeting with 150 British ambassadors. An article published in The Guardian stated that a number of British ministers have privately said that oil is more important in the war decision than the presence of weapons of mass

destruction. They are required: "to bolster the security of British and global energy supplies in an open and expanding global economy."

Britain isn't alone. The US government announced plans to secure the Iraqi oilfields once war is complete and is considering increasing oil production to pay for post-war reconstruction. This comes as no surprise to those who have regarded the Gulf crisis as an all out attempt by the US to gain control over oil production within the region.

The change of control over oil

reserves may complicate the world economy. Increasing Iraqi oil production may be beneficial to Western nations by lowering oil prices. However, such an economic plan would prove detrimental to US oil producing allies. Arguably, these consequences alone overshadow the US government's reasoning to launch a war against Iraq's supposed continual build up of nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

This is certainly not to suggest that Saddam Hussein is an innocent patsy in this game of war. Far from it. But President Bush's obsession with toppling the Iraqi despot through aggressive and destructive means has obscured the importance of seeking a main alternative to war.

Saddam Hussein's influence over Iraq has been one of recent debate and needs to be analysed more closely. Saddam does not have control over the northern region of Iraq and is limited by US

and British enforcement of no-fly zones in the north and the Shi'ite-dominated south. Foreign affairs editor for the Brisbane Courier Mail, David Costello, recently noted that UN weapons inspectors were making surprise visits to Saddam Hussein's "network of luxury palaces which were off-limits to the UN during the 1990s." Furthermore, it has been reported that in an attempt to garner support from the Iraqi people, Saddam has been forced to 'loosen up' his repression of Iraq, including the freeing of tens of thousands of prisoners (which included political detainees) in October last year.

Can Iraq really be accused of being uncooperative with the US government?

In December 2002 the US rejected Iraq's offer to have Central Intelligence Agency officers help United Nations inspectors hunt for biological and chemical weapons. This may be nothing

more than a public relations stunt against the US who remain disinterested by Iraq's request.

Tensions have been exacerbated recently. Three Iraqi civilians were killed and another 16 wounded in an early raid by US and British war planes enforcing the Iraqi southern no-fly zone. Iraq has stepped up its food rations to let citizens prepare for the onslaught of war against US forces.

In another development, the US Army has launched its biggest military exercise involving thousands of soldiers and hundreds of armored vehicles into live-fire exercises in the Kuwaiti desert. Iraq announced that the US would "declare war regardless of what [Iraq] did."

Where does this leave Australia? Military planners are assuming there will be a war in March. The Federal opposition has openly stated they want any military action to be sanctioned by the UN.

Bush preparing US for 'war on two fronts'

TRISTAN EWINS

A nation of some 22 million, North Korea has long posed as something of a mystery to Western commentators. Closed and insular, the Communist North is being driven to engage with the broader international community, as well as its Southern neighbour. Threat of famine, and the problem of diplomatic and economic isolation following the collapse of the Soviet Union, have acted to motivate the North in its attempts at building dialogue with the South.

In 2001 the North's 'Committee for Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland' proposed: 'that dialogue between North and South Korea reopen as soon as possible to open a wider road to reconciliation, unity and national unification'.

As opposed to the previous tendency towards tension and confrontation, the 'Sunshine Policy', embraced by South Korea, has based itself upon the ideal of rapprochement and reconciliation, facilitated through the provision of economic aid, the development of trade ties, family reunion, and ongoing dialogue. Expectations have grown steadily, especially in South Korea, that this process of engagement would lead eventually to a negotiated re-unification. The 'Sunshine Policy' has developed with the clear renunciation of any suggestion the South might simply 'absorb' the North.

The recent election of pro-reconciliation Presidential candidate Roh Moo-Hyun has promised to breath new life into this policy of engagement and dialogue, even despite the looming confrontation between Pyongyang and Washington. Roh Moo-Hyun recently took aim at the Bush Administration reminding them that, should the confrontation with the North turn hot, is it Koreans who would pay the price.

"It ought to be borne in mind that a failed US policy toward the North would be a matter of life and death for South Koreans while it would not be to US citizens", the newly

elected President commented.

The move towards greater engagement and dialogue were dealt a serious blow in October 2002 as the North openly confirmed that it had reinitiated its nuclear weapons programme. The North's admission thus effectively ended the 1994 'Agreed Framework' under which the North was to receive light-water nuclear technology in exchange for a commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

This fateful course had been preceded, however, by North Korean allegations that the US itself had violated the 'Agreed Framework' having failed to deliver heavy fuel oil according to schedule and by not moving forward as planned with the light-water reactors.

Apart from the North's claims, we can only speculate on what further motivations lay behind its move, but possibly

George Bush's identification of North Korea as part of an 'Axis of Evil' suggests his willingness to take pre-emptive actions to take out weapons of mass-destruction. The new Bush doctrine, foreseeing the development of tactical nuclear weapons seems to suggest the possibility of a 'nuclear first strike'.

the North felt compelled to act in the face of a Hawkish US Administration eager to extinguish all remaining barriers to its global hegemony.

It is within the realm of legitimate speculation to suppose

that North Korea is hoping to establish a nuclear deterrent in order to be able to afford some relaxation of their military budget which, at 20%-25% of GDP, is a massive and crippling drain upon the North Korean economy. According to the Power and Interest News Report, North Korea has the fourth largest military in the world with over 1.2 million armed personnel.

Constant references in the Western media to the regime being irrational and unstable, have been made with the effect of building up the fear and apprehension necessary to rationalise possible military

some 100,000 in the broader region, the prospects of mutual disarmament between North and South Korea seem slim.

George Bush's identification of North Korea as part of an 'Axis of Evil' suggests his willingness to take pre-emptive actions to take out weapons of mass-destruction. The new Bush doctrine, foreseeing the development of tactical nuclear weapons seems to suggest the possibility of a 'nuclear first strike'. There is prospect of the US fighting wars on two fronts: against Pyongyang and Baghdad. US Secretary of State Colin Powell, has hosed down speculation of this sort, arguing



US warship off North Korean coastline.

his intention to take the diplomatic road. Such a road may include crippling sanctions again driving the Communist nation into the grip of famine. The assumption is the US is biding its time, planning military action at a later stage: 'Iraq first', 'North Korea later'.

As tensions have spiraled between Pyongyang and the US, Anti-American sentiment has exploded in South Korea.

The deaths of two South Korean schoolgirls in a road accident involving a US serviceman acted as the catalyst for an unprecedented display of anger and frustration. As many as

300,000 South Koreans mobilised, demanding greater control over US forces stationed in their country. Many demonstrators demanded the total withdrawal of US forces.

The term 'Rogue State' is being used to describe states which do not form part of the support structure of the global US hegemony in the post Soviet world order. In such a way, the US is poised to rationalise the removal of all resistance to its global hegemony – either through direct application of military force, or through covert action, or diplomatic pressure, including sanctions and/or the withdrawal of vital humanitarian aid. An ideology legitimising the US as 'world policeman' for a world order it is constructing in its image.

Certainly, North Korean trade and production has collapsed since the fall of the USSR. The country has few significant trading partners, and few means of securing hard currency except from arms exports. It is in the country's interests to pursue a policy of engagement and rapprochement – as opposed to one of confrontation.

The North's willingness to adapt, was evidenced by the decision to establish a free-trade zone its northwest border with China, and to solicit foreign investment.

In the current war of nerves, it is the Korean people who stand to suffer. There is time to press on with negotiations aimed at ending the current nuclear tensions, fostering conditions conducive to mutual disarmament, and of further political, cultural and economic engagement.

It is time to give peace a chance.

The author resides in Melbourne, Australia, and is a writer, long time member of the 'Socialist Left' grouping of the Australian Labor Party, and former member of the Victorian ALP's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee.

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'Bugger all' – the Yorta Yorta native title decision

MIKI PERKINS

Four words ended the legal battle that the Yorta Yorta Aboriginal community had fought for over 10 years in order to gain Native Title over Yorta Yorta land in northern Victoria: 'Appeal dismissed with costs'.

The Yorta Yorta Native Title claim was one of the first Native Title cases to be initiated in Australia following the Mabo decision in 1992. In fact, the Native Title claim was the eighteenth attempt in over 150 years of direct colonisation that the Yorta Yorta attempted to claim rights to land. Despite these campaigns, only small parcels of land have been handed back under various Land Acts, and none since Mabo. Victorian Kooris now legally own less than one percent of the original land they occupied before British colonisation. The Native Title claim area comprised government-owned land around the Barmah Forest and Echuca, in northern Victoria.

The Federal Court trial commenced in 1996 before Justice Olney. Olney was dissatisfied with much of the written evidence provided by the Yorta Yorta and disallowed several thousand pages of oral testimony by elders. Instead he chose to focus closely on the writings of Edward Curr, a pastoralist and amateur ethnographer in the region in the 1850s.

Curr's *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria*, was written some forty years after his time in the region and was heavily influenced by nineteenth century obsessions with racial superiority. The uncorroborated personal reflections of Curr, who gained much from the seizure of Yorta Yorta lands, was privileged by Olney over Yorta Yorta oral testimony.

Justice Olney rejected the Native Title claim by ruling that

the 'tide of history has washed away any real acknowledgment of laws or customs', and that the Yorta Yorta had 'lost their traditional connection with the land'. Olney imagined 'traditions' as rigid historical entities, refusing to acknowledge the ability of traditions to adapt or change. This interpretation of Native Title ignores the effects of colonisation on Indigenous culture.

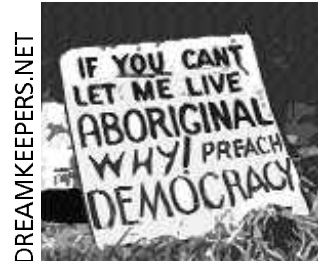
The Yorta Yorta appealed the decision, and won the right of appeal to the High Court in May 2002. In the courtroom white Australian myth-making continued, one lawyer referring to the

outrage amongst the Yorta Yorta:

"On reflection, I think this has severely if not irreparably damaged relations between Indigenous claimants, the native process and the parasitic expert industry in Australia. After nearly a decade of struggle, we now at least know where we stand with Native Title. I personally feel a great sense of freedom in that we are no longer gagged and oppressed by the Native Title process. I think it's time for our people to unleash themselves from the shackles that the Native Title process has imposed, and to speak direct and strong like our forebears in the past."

There are international legal avenues that the Yorta Yorta may choose to pursue. However, most of the Yorta Yorta feel that the

This [decision] has severely if not irreparably damaged relations between Indigenous claimants, the native process and the parasitic expert industry in Australia.



DREAMKEEPERS.NET

'dying out' of Tasmanian Aboriginals, and the Chief Justice equating an Anzac memorial with a 'sacred site'. The decision was delivered in December 2002, and five of the seven Justices upheld Justice Olney's ruling. The Native Title claim was dismissed, with the Yorta Yorta to bear the millions of dollars in costs.

Dr Wayne Atkinson was one of the eight principal claimants, and is a lecturer in the Politics Department at the University of Melbourne. He says the decision has created a sense of anger and

issue should come firmly back onto the domestic political and social agenda as an unresolved matter of Indigenous land justice.

The loss of the Yorta Yorta Native Title claim has thrown the spotlight firmly on the workability and ideology of Native Title Act (NTA). Native Title is a concept that arises from an Anglo-legal tradition. It is not a term that Aboriginal communities use to express their connection to country, but rather is an Anglo-legal concept that claims to straddle the interface between Aboriginal and imported law. Enacted in

courtrooms, is almost exclusively articulated by non-Indigenous lawyers, and enriches a vast Native Title industry. It privileges Anglo-centric methods of record keeping such as written anthropological and ethnographic material.

In the heavily populated and economically valuable Yorta Yorta claim area, the dominant powers had much to lose from a successful land rights claim, and the NTA has indeed proven to uphold the status quo in white Australia. The NTA is not merely prey to conservative interpretations but rather possesses an inherently neo-colonial nature. As Dr Atkinson says;

"I am now in a position to say, without fear of distortion, that Native Title gives you bugger all. The survival of Yorta Yorta identity and connections with the ancestral lands will continue. As often asserted during the Native Title claim, the Yorta Yorta land struggle will continue at the same time as the struggle for racial equality, and social, economic and cultural autonomy."

The roots of Native Title derive from a colonial framework that systematically devalues Indigenous cultural practices. The judicial interpretation of tradition as a static and far-distant entity forces Indigenous communities to either conform to white ideas of Aboriginality, or take a backseat on the legal landscape. It is ironic that the tool of the coloniser is lauded by white Australians as a possible avenue of justice to a dispossessed people. For as a saying goes, 'the master's tools can never dismantle the master's house'.

Thanks to Wayne Atkinson for his generosity in discussing the Yorta Yorta Native Title Claim.

World Briefs

Bush moves to restore military ties with Indonesia

The administration of US President George W. Bush has moved a major step closer toward restoring military ties with the Indonesian military (TNI), which it hopes will be a key ally in its "war against terrorism" in Southeast Asia.

The administration has claimed that Indonesia, the country with the world's greatest Muslim population, remains a key recruiting ground and possible safe haven for al-Qaeda and its sympathisers, a notion bolstered by last October's terrorist attack on a nightclub in Bali.

The Senate voted 61-36 Thursday to defeat an amendment that would have barred funding for enrolling Indonesians in Washington's International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme until it cooperates fully in an investigation into the killing of two US teachers in West Papua last summer.

There has been substantial opposition to the US renewing military ties with the TNI, which is widely considered by international human rights groups as one of the world's most abusive and corrupt national military institutions. Since even before the military coup d'etat by former President Soeharto in 1964, the armed forces have dominated the state apparatus. ipsnews.ips.org

Iraq's neighbours reject war

While the number of US troops in the Persian Gulf is rising to 150,000, Iraq's neighbours have ended a conference in Istanbul with a call to Saddam Hussein to cooperate fully with UN arms inspectors. But they have avoided any public call for the Iraqi leader to step down.

The plea for a peaceful solution to Iraq's stand-off with the international community was contained in a joint declaration hammered out after 13 hours of closed-door talks by the foreign ministers of Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Egypt, though not a neighbour of Iraq, attended. Kuwait was not invited.

"The countries of this region do not wish to live through yet another war and all its devastating consequences," said a joint communiqué read by the Turkish foreign minister, Yasar Yakis.

The joint statement urged Iraq to "respect internationally recognized boundaries," resolve outstanding issues with its neighbours and take firm steps toward national reconciliation that would preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq."

Syria's foreign minister, Farouk al-Sharaa, whose country is the only Arab state on the UN Security Council, cast the declaration as a message not just to Iraq, but to the United States.

"The joint declaration is self-explanatory," he said. "The open message and the hidden message is peace, and no war. Our solidarity is with a peaceful solution, and the rejection of military action." ipsnews.ips.org

continued page 6

High time for higher education

JASON BRAYSHAW

In Victoria we have a state government free from almost all opposition. There is no longer tough opposition to 'sound check' new political ideas or party platforms. What does a Bracks style ALP mean for Victoria, and the revamp of Victoria's public education system? Where to now?

The Knowledge Nation is an ambitious concept. Labor's educational progress is based on student-staff ratios. These have improved since the abolition of 8000 teaching positions, and closure of 350 schools by the former Kennett government. Data from the February 2002 school census shows more than 85% of young people in Victoria are staying at school until year 12 - the highest figures in almost a decade. But what needs to be established and further implemented is an education system that encourages in-

tellectual and moral development in areas such as civil rights and social ecology.

Public accessibility to education has been a major platform for the ALP. In the three years of Victorian ALP what real changes have taken place?

At the end of 2002, the Victorian Institute of Teaching was established and accepted with much gratitude. The new institute is an independent body to register and administer the teaching profession across all school sectors in the state. In addition, it will recommend professional development for teachers and work to raise the public status of teaching, a great incentive for aspiring teachers. Ironically, however, it may be overshadowed by a tertiary school closure. If the Monash University School of Engineering, in Gippsland, is closed next year, many students will have to leave the region to study or else end their education because they are unable to afford relocation costs.

What the Victorian ALP should be concentrating on, in support of the new Teaching

Institute, is a strategy involving teaching staff and students in the decision making process. Perhaps the Bracks government needs to recognise the true value regional campuses add to their surrounding community.

A recent data source released by the Australian Secondary Principals Association has evoked



concern about an increasing number of teachers working outside their area of expertise, in subjects such as IT, manual arts, science and humanities.

Obviously teachers and students are concerned when schools do not have direct control of their faculties and facilities. Schools run the risk of being locked into contracts which do not have the capacity to incorpo-

rate changing demographics.

The Victorian Labor government is in an ideal governing position where traditional ALP issues such as public education can be fully explored. The responsibility for deciding what becomes due process for Victoria's education is now solely on Labor itself. There is the continual need

What needs to be established and further implemented is an education system that encourages intellectual and moral development in areas such as civil rights and social ecology.

to place public interests ahead of its own interests and be opposed to just making a virtue out of dreary economic efficiency. Put simply, if the government is going to further 'revamp' public education it's going to have to create a system Victorians want to be a part of. Unless this happens, Victoria risks being worse for the change.

World Briefs

continued from page 5

Official statement from the Indigenous Movement of Panama:

On Saturday the 18th of January four Indigenous Kuna leaders, were violently tortured and assassinated by the Autonomous Defence Units of Colombia (AUC). These Indigenous spiritual leaders, are medicine men that hold the principal knowledge of our oral history, poets of truth, knowledgeable in medicine, the holders of our cultural heritage, the soul of our community, and are the maximum authority of the Paya and Pucuro communities.

50 Colombian insurgents tore apart the Paya Community, closed in the community, asked for the Indigenous authorities to present themselves and then took them outside the community to torture them, and slash their throats.

As Kuna, we have lived more than 100 years on these lands, and now there is an intention to destroy the peace of our Indigenous communities, selectively assassinating Colombian and Panamanian Indigenous leaders. It is because of this that we are opposed and against the imposition of the FTAA, the Plan Puebla Panama, Andean Plan, and Plan Colombia that are policies to exterminate the communities of the Americas, to expropriate Indigenous territories, our collective knowledge, oil, water, land and our cultural and biological heritage.

Panama, January 22, 2003

Ibe Ikuna de Panama

Movimiento Indigena de Panama
www.indymedia.org

Tougher laws needed for people traffickers

New, special legal weapons and alternative protection measures are needed to combat gross human rights abuses against undocumented foreign women lured into Japan's sex industry, experts here say.

At a just-finished seminar here, activists and legal experts highlighted the lack of an official safety net for migrant labour in Japan, effectively leaving tens of thousands of men and women without visas and thus the target of unscrupulous brokers and gangsters who employ them.

The Justice Ministry reports as of January 2002, there are around 224,067 overstayers in Japan, of which 105,945 are women. More than 46 percent of these women work as bar hostesses, followed by waitresses and factory workers.

By nationality, South Koreans comprise 25 percent of these overstayers, followed by the Philippines, and Thailand. The Thai Embassy in Tokyo reports that two to three Thai women seek refuge each week to escape cruel and degrading working conditions, bondage or forced sexual work.

"Japanese criminal law prohibits trafficking of persons from Japan to another country. But these provisions do not cover the other way around," says Yoko Yoshida, a lawyer with the Young Women's Christian Association in Kyoto.

ipsnews.ips.org

The big Gunns of Tassie

DAMIEN PITTS

Each year, an area of Tasmanian native forest between 11 000 and 15 000 hectares in size is logged. Overwhelmingly, logging practices in Australia employ one of two methods: clear-felling or selective logging. Clearfell logging involves the complete removal of all trees and undergrowth from a site; selective logging spares most of the undergrowth and younger trees and allows them to continue to grow. Two-thirds of the native forests logged in Tasmania are harvested using the clear-felling method.

Ninety-two per cent of clear-felled native forest logs harvested in Tasmania end up as wood chips. These wood chips are exported overseas, where secondary level industries convert them, for the most part, into paper.

Australia imports approximately one-third of its paper incurring a AU\$2 billion annual deficit. This figure takes into account the AU\$350 million contributed annually to Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the revenue attained through wood chip exports. In net terms, paper produced from wood chipping – paper Australia spends an enormous amount of money to import – is roughly ten times more valuable than wood chips in their raw form.

Gunns Limited, a Tasmanian logging company, recently purchased Boral's Tasmanian logging operations, as well as North Forest Products. Gunns Ltd is now the world's largest hardwood chip exporter.

The four major banks of Australia – The Commonwealth Bank, ANZ, National Australia Bank, and Westpac – are all heavy investors in Gunns Ltd. ANZ contributed the AU\$200 000 000 to Gunns to procure North Forest Products' wood chip mill. The Commonwealth Bank plainly has the greatest financial stake in Gunns Ltd, holding more than sixteen percent of Gunns' shares through customer investment spending.

At The Commonwealth's recent annual general meeting (AGM), 159 of the bank's shareholders put forward a resolution for consideration amongst all in attendance. The resolution recommended that The Commonwealth amend its constitution to prohibit investment in old growth logging operations – not only in Tasmania, but across the entire country.

Those shareholders that

were unable to attend the AGM were extended the opportunity to send a proxy as their representative, or, if they owned enough shares, up to two proxies could be sent. However, in the case of shareholders not attending and failing to nominate a representative, The Commonwealth Bank's chairperson was automatically deemed to be their proxy.

The 'Notice of the AGM' package distributed to every shareholder included the following statement:

'The bank's board of directors believe that the reso-

rather, were matters to be tackled by relevant governmental bodies. This stance was adopted in spite of the fact that The Commonwealth Bank's own environmental policy states that "The Commonwealth Bank of Australia regards environmental management as a fundamental aspect of sound business management," and that "the bank is engaged in investment activities largely through its fund management subsidiaries. A key objective of the investment process within the funds management business is to

get that the word democracy means 'self-governing by the people.' Self-government means that crucial decisions are not just turned over to a representative, who is kept accountable only by the threat of withdrawal of power years later; it means that large numbers of people need to get involved in each decision.'

Customer investment equating to business investment leaves power in the customers hands. This is the true investment of democracy in our capitalist world. So in choosing our banks, are we



The Commonwealth Bank plainly has the greatest financial stake in Gunns Ltd, holding more than sixteen percent of Gunns' shares through customer investment spending

lution (i.e. Agenda Item 3, the resolution to terminate The Commonwealth Bank's investment in old growth logging) is not in the best interests of the bank and its shareholders. They intend to vote their shares and all open proxy votes given to them against the resolution.'

This is precisely what the board of directors did, with the effect that, despite the fact that out of a total of 413 million shares, 94 million supported the resolution to amend the bank's constitution – a figure representing the largest support for a shareholder resolution in Australian corporate history – the resolution was defeated.

The Commonwealth Bank justified its decision to oppose Agenda Item 3 chiefly on the grounds that the issues this resolution dealt with were not appropriate for the consideration of a bank but,

access the sustainability of a company's earnings, including environmental practice."

It is possible to entertain the idea that the bank had a point. Aren't state and federal governments supposed to take care of issues like deforestation? What were a bunch of shareholders in a bank doing trying to stop upper management from investing in what was, after all, a perfectly legal activity?

A great many elected officials have effectively been used to enforce the rulings of trade organisations – like the WTO and APEC – and big business. More importantly, suggesting the environment is the government's problem runs against the spirit of democracy. Or, as Holly Dressel and David Suzuki put it in Good News for a Change: Hope for a Troubled Planet:

Like the idea of a 'free market', we've started to for-



Clearfelling, water contamination and regeneration burn, all the legacy of poorly regulated logging.

IMAGES BY GEOFF LAW

really aware that our investment choices equate our lifestyle choices? Either way, it's worth remembering that we're not powerless.

After all, it's our money that makes it happen.

Further reading and reference:
<http://www.wilderness.org.au>

mainstream media

The best of all possible worlds

RAUL RAMIREZ

The mainstream media, by their either indiscriminate or selective reporting, have successfully created the best of all possible worlds by ignoring the world's greatest ills and adhering to the proverb: out of sight, out of mind.

Leibniz philosophised that this is the best of all possible worlds. His philosophy was personified in the character of Dr Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide*. Pangloss's commitment to this dogma was unshakeable.

There is something undeniably Panglossian about people's willingness to look away from the world's ills; to concentrate on the immediate and material and to become humanitarians only for the more fashionable causes.

Reading a newspaper or watching the news one could be forgiven for believing that we live in the best of all possible worlds. Though the daily picture may still be grim, it is infinitely better than would be the case if the media was reporting the true state of affairs. I am often left shaking my head in wonder at how profound an affect the west-centric view of the world can have on people ranging from my peers to university lecturers. This view is so fundamentally flawed yet so implicit in the Australian mentality that it seems almost impossible to efface or even moderate.

When I heard George W. Bush's ultimatum that Iraq

must produce weapons of mass destruction for the good of mankind, I asked myself how long has it been policy to promote nuclear proliferation? What was the purpose of weapons inspections if Bush was going to disregard their findings anyway? The media, of course, asks neither of these questions or a multitude of others that need asking. They choose, rather, to show photos of lunar landscapes with arrows pointing to specks of space-dust and calling these specks undeniable evidence of Iraq's nuclear development program.

The implication of the US's reasons for war, which no one in the mainstream media cares to challenge, is that Saddam Hussein, former American puppet extraordinaire, plans to 'nuke' the United States or Israel. How realistic is this scenario though? I, myself, have never heard Saddam proclaim a first strike policy on the US, or declare a 'War on Terror' or a 'War on Drugs' (I understand this was not a Bush policy). Nor has Saddam recently formed a hit list called the 'Axis of Evil' or implied that Satan is among us in the person of Osama Bin Laden by describing him as

'the evil one'.

While I, and any sane person must accept that Hussein is a tyrant, there has been no real assessment of the threat he poses. Naturally, he cannot have as much power as when he was supported by the US and UK. Also, his capacity for developing nuclear and chemical weapons has logically diminished since the aforementioned states stopped providing him with dual-use technologies which he could use for WMD development. The most important question the media has failed to ask is if Saddam is such a threat to

time you heard or read about the civil wars in Sudan or the Congo. We live in a nation where the media is so good as to edit out these unsightly conflicts, which, coupled with aids and extreme poverty put Africa's death toll at around 6000 people per day (almost two September 11's). I have long been waiting for George Bush to wage a 'War on war' or a 'War on acquired immune deficiency disease', or maybe even a 'War on the poor' (CNN will like the latter because it rhymes).

The media has been equally willing to look away

Reading a newspaper or watching the news one could be forgiven for believing that we live in the best of all possible worlds. Though the daily picture may still be grim, it is infinitely better than would be the case if the media was reporting the true state of affairs.

mankind why was this not the case one year ago, or more importantly, at the end of the Gulf War when the allies were in a position to depose him but chose not to.

The media's selective vision does not end with the Middle East. The last time any African nation made the news was when the lives of Miss World contestants were almost/sort-of in danger. Consider the last

from Afghanistan. One could be forgiven for thinking that the Taliban materialised on September the 11th, 2001, for all the coverage Afghanistan received prior to September 11. Afghanistan is a nation divided by tribal differences which I don't think we in the west can begin to understand. Tajik, Hazareh and Uzbek tribes have long been persecuted by Pashtoon governments (in-

cluding the Taliban) and the majority of the asylum seekers coming to Australia are of these minorities fleeing the Taliban. This has been lost on John Howard, however, who somehow fails to realise, or does not wish to realise, that our enemy's enemy is our friend. Additionally, the media has taken a vow of silence on the real situation in Afghanistan as they did with Iraq since the end of the Gulf War, which may account for why Howard's claims have been accepted by much of the population.

I concede, though, that the media outdid themselves in their portrayal of the multiplicity of threats asylum seekers pose. After all, how many instances throughout history have there been of oppressed minorities doing their oppressor's dirty work; carrying out acts of terrorism against those who offer them sanctuary?

The media is the single most influential tool of any government. This fact alone is bad enough without being added to by the warped views forced upon us by British and American news agencies. The mainstream media should concern themselves with reporting the facts and not representing the best of all possible worlds. Alternatively, all we can hope for is that people start to realise the bias of the mainstream media and start looking for alternative sources of information.

Obsession with Iraq ignores African crises

THALIF DEEN

The international community and the news media are paying too much attention to Iraq and too little to the calamities facing Africa, senior UN officials have said. The African continent, they warn, is being threatened by a famine, destabilised by an intense civil war in Ivory Coast and endangered by an AIDS epidemic made worse by a shortage of funds.

The AIDS pandemic in Africa has been getting worse by the day, Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS, told a press conference.

Lewis, who just returned to New York after visiting Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia, said the epidemic can not be allowed to continue, and those who watch it unfold "with a kind of pathological equanimity" must be held to account. "There may yet come a day when we have peacetime tribunals to deal with this particular version of crimes against humanity," he added.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan also lamented that Iraq and Palestine are "the only crises in the headlines". The news media, he said, have been pas-

sionately focusing on Iraq. "Why is it that we focus only on one?" he asked.

Annan said the UN Security Council should remain fixed on Iraq, but the other arms of the United Nations and the international community should deal with other issues, specifically the famine in Africa, the spread of AIDS and global poverty. The worldwide AIDS epidemic, he said, will claim many more lives this year than even a war in Iraq would, "and then go on claiming more and more lives in 2004 and 2005".

In southern Africa and the Horn of Africa, Annan pointed out, as many as 30 million people face the threat of starvation this year. "Poverty everywhere is condemning mothers and infants to

premature deaths, sending them to bed hungry, denying them clear drinking water, and keeping them away from school."

Carolyn McAskie, the UN's deputy emergency relief coordinator, said that the humanitarian situation in Ivory Coast is going from bad to worse. Nearly one million of the country's 16 million people has been displaced and uprooted since last December, she said. "The scale of

Liberia, said McAskie. So far, about 130,000 of them have fled for home while 23,000 Ivoirians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Health care in the north of the country has been severely affected, she added. "The delivery of supplies had been disrupted and the civil servants working in the north were fleeing south to Abidjan, so a lot of clinics and schools were closing and lot of

terrible - every country I visited exhibited strengths and hopes," he said.

One of the saddest manifestations of a society "coming apart at the seams", added Lewis, was the growing rate of sexual abuse of children and adolescents, "which had reached shocking proportions". An astronomical number of orphans is a new phenomenon for which there is no evident solution, he said, and has created a growing number of orphaned street children, orphan gangs and orphan delinquency.

Annan said the crisis in Zimbabwe and the civil war in Ivory Coast are other issues crying out for attention. The tragic situation in Zimbabwe, which has been deprived of Western economic and food aid because of allegations of electoral fraud, is caused partly by the forces of nature and partly by mismanagement, said the UN chief. "We could debate endlessly which of them made the greater contribution," he added.

Ipsnews.org

the UN Security Council should remain fixed on Iraq, but the other arms of the United Nations and the international community should deal with other issues, specifically the famine in Africa, the spread of AIDS and global poverty.

displacement is enormous, caused by the fighting in the west of the country."

The economic centre of West Africa, Ivory Coast attracts thousands of people from neighbouring countries, including Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea and

basic services were not operating."

According to Lewis, African countries are increasingly demonstrating the political will to fight HIV/AIDS, but they lack money. "As bad as things were in southern Africa - and they were

Peace sentiments around the world



Peace from Antarctica



Simply against war. WWW.INDYMEDIA.ORG



Above: peace rallies, Melbourne



US anti-war rally. WWW.INDYMEDIA.ORG



Below: Daily peace vigil, Melbourne 2003. WWW.INDYMEDIA.ORG

Below: Yoko Ono re-iterates Lennon's call for peace, Piccadilly Circus, London. ICEPICK.COM



Letters

Send to: PO Box 1733 Collingwood, VIC 3066, or letters@thepaper.org.au

Drop us a line with comments or complaints, rants and ideas. Maximum length should be around 200 words.

Front Page story?

Dear Editors,

As both a regular reader and an occasional contributor to 'The Paper' I was somewhat perplexed and taken aback by your choice of cover story for the December edition. While not denying that a sense of humour is essential for activists, I somehow wonder whether the article 'Parliamentary pash protest a success' merited a full front page, particularly given the (high) calibre and relevance of the other competing stories in this edition. How exactly was the protest a 'success'? What was its point? I don't deny (nor would any thinking activist) that protest and dissent against institutions of globalisation is necessary and

important, but exactly what was the Spin the Bottle bloc trying to achieve? To counter the evils of the WTO – or to make the left look ridiculous?

I don't have anything against kiss-ins in particular – I've undertaken some as part of anti-homophobia protests by queer groups in the past – but the difference then was that the means and the ends were at least connected. Whereas I don't really know that the Spin the Bottle bloc's somewhat semi-indulgent canoodling would really have an impact on government, the WTO et al, or really be understood or appreciated by the millions of activists, unionists, villagers and workers the world over affected adversely by globalisation.

Of course these 'pashtivists' as they call themselves have the right to do whatever they want – but you have to ask whether it really merits the coverage it got as opposed to other, more effective means of political dissent and activity against the WTO happening in Sydney and elsewhere.

Andrew Milnes, Northcote.

Alternative oath

Dear Editors,

In response to the Victorian branch of the Australia Day Committee's timely "commitment oath", which we are informed is to be passionately recited at

Federation square and at barbecues across Victoria on Australia Day. I propose an alternate oath with a slight change of tone for those of us in danger of vomiting up perfectly good barbecued prawns.

INVASION DAY OATH

We are un-Australian

We stand here proudly

Brave, strong, for open borders, and intolerant of those who seek to poison our minds with racist nationalism

We will not stand by while a privileged few enrich themselves at our expense

Under a system that perpetuates unfairness, lies and the

imprisonment of those who cross borders to flee its poverty and oppression

Together with the workers and oppressed peoples of the world we will build a future that fulfils the needs of the many, not just the few

But we will not forget the crimes and injustices of the past towards the original inhabitants of this country and the peoples of this region at the hands of our government and military

United against Australian imperialism, we stand together

We are un-Australian

Katharine Neil

Terrorist connections

ESTI (The Paper's Basque correspondent)

Do you agree with terrorism? Some country's laws define terrorism as any action with the intention of breaking the actual political system. Anything against the status quo is terrorism. Are you a terrorist? You may think that they are speaking about people with bombs under their clothes but actually this definition is also valid for the people climbing buildings to put up banners, or people sitting on a road to stop nuclear waste transport.

Unfortunately, some places have suffered antiterrorist laws for many years. Any group fighting for freedom has been considered a terrorist, and since September 11th the issue has become more prominent with Australia facing a similar situation.

Now I want to tell you a real story, it's a story about the Basque land. We've been living under antiterrorist laws since Franco died and the "democracy" came to the Spanish Estate. Sadly we know what is coming now to your country. This is the story~

The Spanish police arrested some members of ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna: Basque and Freedom) as they were suspected of planning a bomb attack. They were automatically declared Basque terrorists. They were tortured at the police station, as the terrorist laws allow the detainees five days without a lawyer or a doctor. Some of these people were members of the separatist political party Batasuna. The Spanish parliament has made a new law so they can make the party illegal and all the leaders are presently on bail.

Demonstrations against this injustice were deemed illegal. 80 000 people still demonstrated on the streets. In the flat of some of the detainees they found newspapers and magazines~ in Basque! In

The Spanish government supported by all the big media held a criminalisation campaign against the Basque school for adults and the Basque primary and secondary schools. They were declared schools of terrorism and laws were changed forcing these schools to teach Spanish history and literature instead of Basque culture.

the last few years a magazine (Ardi Beltza), a radio (Egin Irratia) and a newspaper (Egin) have been closed because the "terrorists were using them as information resources". The editors were imprisoned. The friends and relatives of the "terrorists" (or "political prisoners" depending on who you ask), joined the or-

ganisation to support them. The organisation was made illegal (Gestoras pro Amnistia) so they created a new one (Askatasuna). Now this second one is in the list of terrorist groups of the EU. The court is even trying to prosecute the lawyers and some of them have been placed in prison.

Most of the "terrorists" speak the Basque language~the language of the devil! (Oh no, that was during the inquisition, now it is the language of terror.) The Spanish government supported by all the big media held a criminalisation campaign against the Basque school for adults and

putting up those just in Spanish. The situation is this: if you graffiti on a wall saying 'I love you', you probably have to do some community service for vandalism. If you write 'freedom for the Basque', you can go to prison for

But I am not trying to scare you. You have to fight more than ever, just be careful and be prepared. We're fighting more than ever and still hopeful~all of the laws and repression do not stop us, they just give us more of an ar-

Don't get confused. Anti-terrorist laws are about you. Anyone can be arrested. We are all terrorists.



six years for terrorism.

Trespassing the borders, the squatting movement in Barcelona has been heavily criminalised and some of the members are in prison for helping "Basque terrorists". The same politics seem to be coming close to the rest of the social movements in Basque, Catalunya and the rest of the Spanish state.

gument towards our desire to be free from military and police states.

So... don't get confused. Anti-terrorist laws are about you. Anyone can be arrested. We are all terrorists. We are all illegal. Maitasuna eta askatasuna. Love and freedom.

'Pinochet of the East' dead but not forgotten

TAARIQ M.HASSAN

General Tikka Khan, known to Bengalis as 'The Butcher of Bangladesh,' died in March 2002 in Rawalpindi. The former chief of the Pakistan army was 87 and died after a protracted illness. He was buried in the military graveyard in Rawalpindi, accompanied by full military honours.



Bangladeshi peace brigade

Tikka Khan was born in Jochha Mamdot village in Kahuta district, east of Rawalpindi, (Undivided Punjab), in 1915. He graduated from the RIMC at Dehra Doon in 1940 with an officer's commission. He served in Burma and the Sahara desert during WW2. After Partition he served as an instructor with the Pakistani military College. By 1969 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General.

General Khan's most infamous role was as chief martial law administrator of what was then known as East Pakistan, under the command of the dictator General Yahya Khan. During 1971 he led a bloody crackdown on intellectuals, students, non Muslims and anyone else sympathetic to the liberation movement led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Thousands of people were raped, tortured and summarily executed in a bid to keep East Pakistan under West Pakistan's control.

On the night of the 25/3/1971, under Gen. Khan's command, a murderous assault was carried out at Dhaka University. Hundreds of students were killed in cold blood in an attempt to eradicate a hotbed of dissent against the West Pakistanis.

General Khan's soldiers were told that Pathans and Punjabis were the real pure Muslims and the East Pakistanis must have the 'Hindu blood' taken out of them. Bangladeshi women were system-

atically raped by these soldiers in an effort to change the genetic make up of the local population. The men were held at gunpoint by soldiers and asked to raise their lungis (Indian Sarongs). If they were not circumcised they were deemed "the enemy" and shot on the spot. His forces killed thousands of Bengalis in a systematic

a murderous assault was carried out at Dhaka University. Hundreds of students were killed in cold blood in an attempt to eradicate a hotbed of dissent against the West Pakistanis.

attempt to subdue their struggle for liberation and independence.

The East Pakistani Awami league had won the balance of power in the combined East and West elections around that time. The West Pakistanis, not interested in being governed by the Bengali Muslims whom they had exploited since the 1950's, sent the army in to quell the uprising that followed the elections. The Indian army sided with the new state of Bangladesh and beat the Pakistanis in what turned into the Indo-Pak war of 1971.

Gen. Khan was elevated to chief of Army in 1972, replacing this author's father's friend, the Late Gen. Gul Hassan Khan. In Pakistan there has not been much of a clear differentiation between

the military and politics so following his retirement from the army, Gen. Tikka Khan entered the political arena. He joined the Sindhi based Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party and was appointed Governor of Pakistan's Punjab district in 1988. He remained an ally of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto until the end.

Although present Pakistani leader Gen. Pervez Musharraf has made some noises that resemble an apology to Bangladesh as a nation, Bangladesh has not forgiven Gen. Tikka Khan or Pakistan for its unspeakably violent and murderous actions during the martial law crackdown in Dhaka in 1971.

If Mr. S. Milosovic and General Pinochet of Chile can be tried for crimes against humanity, then what about Pakistan's culpability and involvement in atrocities in the events surrounding East Pakistan's succession from West Pakistan?

Lest we forget a most shameful series of events involving crimes against humanity.

Somebody's soul food

KATIE DOWLING talks to Maude Clark, co-founder of Somebody's Daughter Theatre, a company providing creative nourishment for silenced and disadvantaged women, and a platform from which their stories might be known.

*Load the fit sisters, we're away, and
We won't be back 'til we can't pay
If I still remember then the dope's no good
Or maybe I'm just tired of feeling like a bad girl...
Maybe I'm just tired of thinking like a bad girl...
Maybe I'm just tired of acting like a bad girl should*

from *The Touch*, by Greg Sneddon
(pianist and songwriter for Somebody's Daughter)

Somebody's Daughter Theatre juxtaposes tender vulnerability and brittle world-weariness in 'So Full of Brave', to an enthralling effect. It is three parts angst, five parts bittersweet, and two parts sorrow. All parts are played to perfection. All the shows are derived from the actors' real experiences. *So Full of Brave* is a dark show. It starts in prison and ends with the death of a character. Its characters are sentenced to jail; they get released, shoot up, 'nod off' on heroin and pills. Two lose or have lost children. All face the demons of their past. Jazz, an ex-junkie, describes how her brother, when they played

'mums and dads', used to hit them because 'he thought that's what dads did. He must've been a good dad, cause he hit hard'.

Somebody's Daughter was born out of drama classes in Fairlea Women's prison. In 1980, some VCA students, including Maude Clark and Stella Tarrant, took the show *Female Transport* into Fairlea Women's Prison. Maude says, 'a very articulate English woman named Brenda Gordon-Jones asked "could we have some drama classes?" So Stella and I, and Greg Sneddon, started drama workshops inside the jail'. In 1991, two released prisoners urged Maude to found a company outside of prison so they could gain ongoing support. Somebody's Daughter was formed and the first show traced the journey of one woman outside of jail, and her efforts to stay straight. It is a journey which, eleven years later, the Daughters play out over and over again.

Donna, an actor in *So Full of Brave*, has served eight prison sentences. It was during the last of these that she performed in the show, *The Melways*. She was invited to join the theatre company upon her release. She vacillated between staying 'straight' and drifting back into drugs and crime. Throughout, she stayed in contact with Maude. She sums up a momentous decision in just a few words: 'one day I decided I didn't want to live that sort of life any more'. She joined the company and performed in the 2001 season of *So Full of Brave*. She is now employed full time, helping facilitate the workshops for the company's second project as well as performing.

Karen Taylor worked at Flat Out, a post-release service for women and children, before joining Somebody's Daughter. She was asked along by her client Rachel, who plays Teisha in *So Full of Brave*, and who she had herself referred to the company. 'I was really afraid of her being so isolated when she came out because of her degree of institutionalisation. I knew our agency couldn't actually give her what she needed, so I linked her up with Somebody's Daughter. Rachel has moved in and out of Somebody's Daughter. Like Donna, she has had to struggle against her addiction. She says she is enjoying being in the company 'sometimes. But when everybody gets premenstrual it can get a bit much'. Catherine, another company member, has a Bachelor of Education in drama and design. She says she 'went off the rails' after finishing her degree. At a college friend's recommendation, she hooked up with Somebody's Daughter. Lydia, who got involved in May this year, elected to be released from prison in the afternoon, rather than the morning, so as not to miss performing in the show *Angels in the Midst*. At the end of the performance, she walked out with the audience, an experience she describes as 'quite bizarre'.

In 2001, Somebody's Daughter took its workshops into Albury-Wodonga and created Highwater Theatre, an intensive creative arts-based programme for at-risk young people. Some of these young people have been excluded from the educational system for years. Maude speaks calmly but passionately. 'The whole violence, the abuse that is with this group of people is something that I've learnt as I've gone along. [They live in] a very volatile, abusive, unkind world. Often you will go to pick up one of the kids, and find that the mum's been bashed, the kid has jumped in to save the mum, and she's been bashed'.

Says Chloe, writing in *Splash of Life*: 'my friends found out I was a foster kid and they dumped me. With the problems of my father disowning me and my mum calling me a slut and gutter trash, everyone seemed to expect me to go to school and be all happy as if there was nothing wrong'.

Gaining insight into these youngsters' lives has taught Maude to let go of her attachment to sleek production and to refocus her priorities. 'Maybe the aesthetic value of a show will suffer a little bit because you'll have less time to work with a particular actor, but you still want that person to be in the show'. She continues, 'it's a very gruelling, gruelling, gruelling kind of life that people are in. I want people to understand how many people are in

prison that have been sexually abused. I want people to understand what strip searches do to people'. Especially, she points out, in women who have already been sexually abused. According to a Victorian Housing Service (VHS) study, this equates to 85% of the female prison population.



In one scene, Meg, a social worker, is arrested at a protest. She is forced into a cell and subjected to a strip search. 'Remove your shirt,' says the stern officer's voice. 'Pants. Bra - shake and drop. Underpants'.

'I've got my period', Meg says, panicked.

'I've seen it all before. Take off your underpants!'

'I wear a pad, not a tampon!'

'Take off your underpants!'

Fearfully, Meg obliges.

'Spread your cheeks and bend over!'

'I'm not doing that!'

'If you don't we'll do it for you by force!'

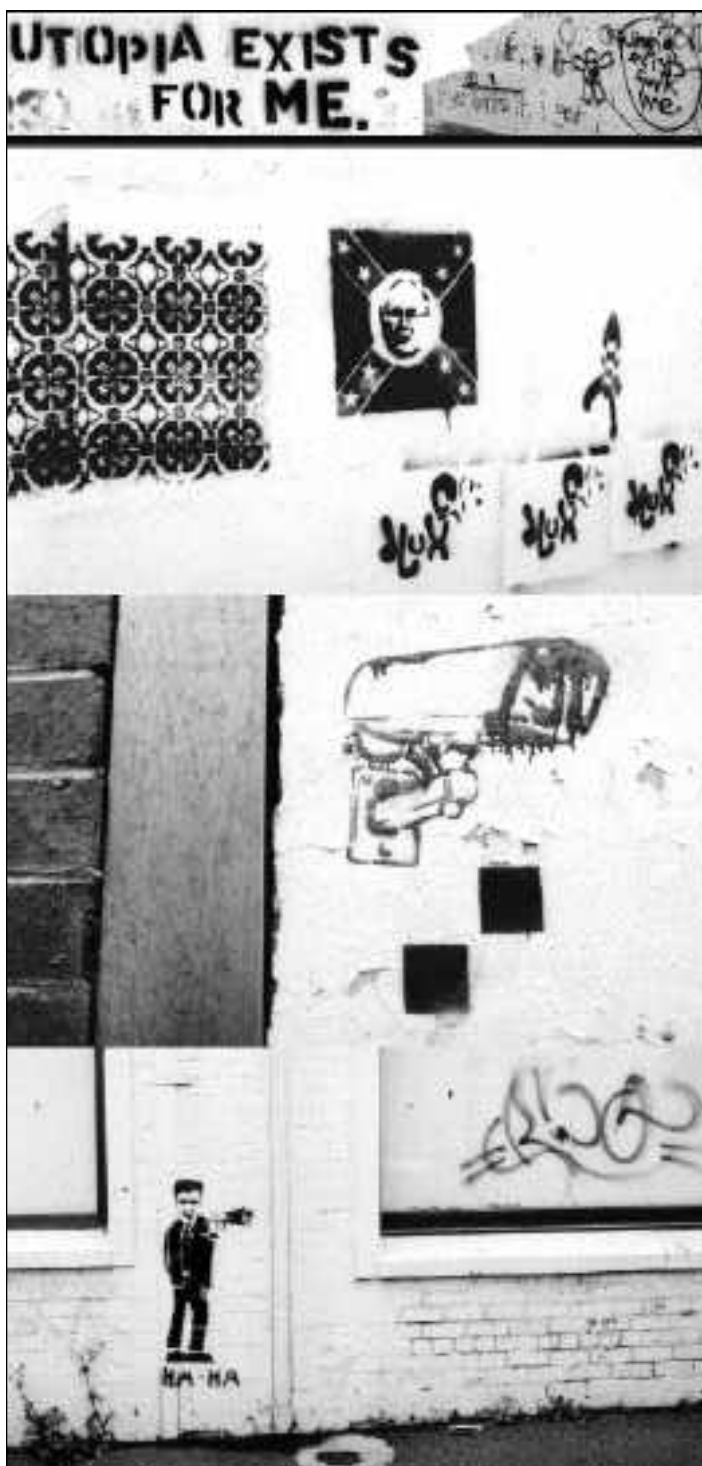
Meg lifts up her arms, agonised and helpless. 'Nooooo!'

This experience blurs the lines between 'us' and 'them' for Meg. But it doesn't prevent tragedy. While she goes down to the pub and gets 'shit-faced', after her ordeal, her client Jane leaves message after slurred message on her mobile phone. She has lost custody of her children to an abusive partner, and eventually takes a drug overdose and dies.

During the production of the Somebody's Daughter show *Call my Name*, two actors died. One overdosed, the other committed suicide. This was a stinging tragedy, but it wasn't new. At the end of the 1996 show *Tell Someone Who Cares*, the actors lit a candle for each of the Victorian women who had died shortly after release from prison in the past five years. There were 63 candles. Present at the show were two academics from La Trobe University, Sandy Cook and Dr Susanne Davies. The tragedy they witnessed spurred them to undertake a study into women's post-release mortality in Victoria. The researchers concluded that 60 out of 62 of the deaths studied could have been prevented. Since the year 2000, another 31 deaths have been added to that number.

Somebody's Daughter is still giving these women a voice, mourning their deaths, in the hope that further tragedies will be averted. Trying to transform such tragedies from something that happens to 'them' into something that affects 'us'. It is perhaps only the first step, but it is a crucial one. And alongside it, the Daughters will continue to create quality art. 'Part of what the show is, and why theatre is such a great medium, is because if people make an emotional journey, you are meeting heart-to-heart', Maude says. 'You're meeting as a human being, so all of those labels, those protective devices, break down'.

This is what Somebody's Daughter is primarily about. Giving art to people who have been denied it: 'we all need art. We all need music. It's soul food, it's heart food. Without it as human beings we wither. And we are diminished'.



Confederate Johnny, surveillance camera, hacha: Melbourne. photo's: Tom Civil

Ordinary realism

CHRIS POVEY critiques *Lovely and Amazing*, a film that frames the common place.

‘Tell them to fuck off’ is the mantra of former homecoming queen and failed artist Michele (Catherine Keener). Elizabeth (Emily Mortimer) rescues a stray dog and is disfigured. Their eight-year-old sister Annie (Raven Goodwin) wishes she could tear off her black skin in order to be more like her white adoptive mother Jane (Brenda Blethyn), who is having 10 pounds of fat removed by liposuction.

Issue packed realism doesn't tend to fill me with excitement. Too much hard work. Yet the dysfunction and complexity depicted in *Lovely and Amazing* transcends its grave origins and manages to crack a few gags along the way.

Director Nicole Holofcener's film feels almost like a documentary, as though it merely captures the existence of its characters rather than creating them by a contrived narrative. We follow as Michele aggressively attempts to flog off hand made chairs at a local gift shop. As she watches television and argues with her husband. We see Annie learning to swim and Elizabeth going for job interviews. It is surprising when the self-involved members of this family are drawn together by their concern for their mother when her health falters as a result of cosmetic surgery.

It is remarkable that such an ordinary story about the lives of four women can be so beguiling. Nothing happens. Trying to provide a synopsis of this film is like recounting your week. Friends. Family. Relationships. Work. Eat. Drink. Like reality TV, but not stupid. But then again there are - the 'issues'.

Anxieties about appearance, colour and size occupy the different women in this film. The 'ideas' manifest themselves in eight-year-old Annie who eats constantly while at various stages furiously dying her hair and applying make-up. She is almost a caricature of her adopted sisters and mother who often disregard her.

Interestingly, a doctors and nurses style soap opera is used as a counterpoint to the mundane reality depicted by the characters. Jane lusts after her doctor as a cheesy soap plays on the bedside television. Elizabeth exists between the reality of the film and the artifice of television as she auditions for roles in soap operas. She is required to grope around on a casting couch and passionately read corny dialogue only to be found 'not sexy enough' for the role. Anxious about her appearance and 'dimensions' – she is the very expression of media based insecurities.

It's hard not to wince as Elizabeth's features are casually evaluated while

standing naked before her chance partner (Dermot Mulroney). Arguably this is not an audition but the lines are blurred. How far do media standards of 'value' create personal standards of value? Of this gutsy scene Mortimer explained to the Herald-Sun that 'I had to help the scriptwriter with the speech, and it had to be particular to my body... So I listed 'one eye smaller than the other, slightly big nose, yellow teeth, lank hair and droopy boobs from the side'.

esting to note that Holofcener also gained experience directing episodes of *Sex in the City*. This background no doubt developed Holofcener's realist aesthetic while imbuing her work with a sense of humour rather than self-importance.

Apparently this was not an easy film to make. Whereas James Bond, Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings seem to be doing the same thing over and over only with

The dysfunction and complexity depicted in *Lovely and Amazing* transcends its grave origins and manages to crack a few gags along the way.

Holofcener explained to dga magazine that 'It was a challenge to make a movie about girls who talk about boring things and appear, at first blush, very selfish and trivial. But I don't understand this need by filmmakers to always make their characters sympathetic. If their behaviour is interesting, complex and human, we're going to watch it.'

It is instructive that Holofcener gained experience assisting that great American auteur Woody Allen on both *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (1982) and *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986). Further, given that *Lovely and Amazing* is about the lives of four women, it is inter-

bigger budgets, a relevant film like *Lovely and Amazing* has to be shot on high definition video for less than \$1 million to get made.

It is Amazing not because of a flying car, talking trees or other digital lolly. Lovely not because of its locations or dolby sound. *Lovely and Amazing* because it is ordinary and addresses the subtle complexities of existence.



Comic by gregory Mackay

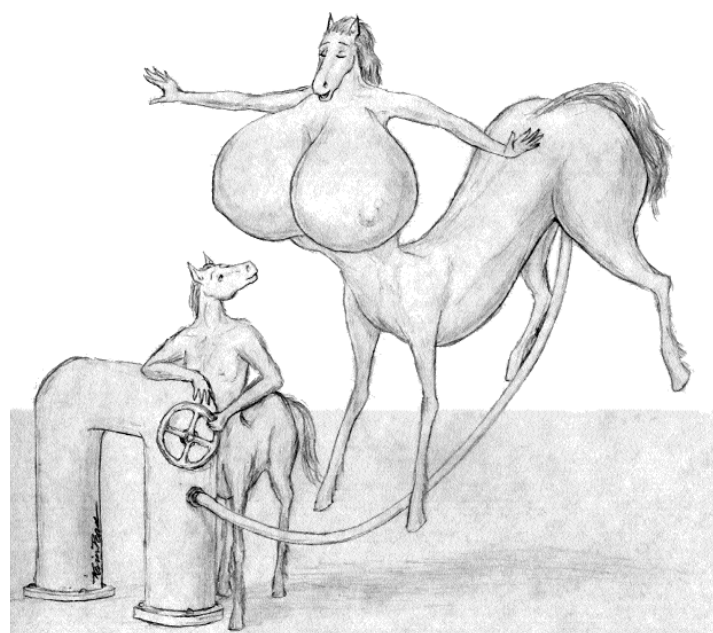
ART-CULT

Blowing Up the Furies

ELLIOT SINEWAVE volunteered to investigate a sexually subversive subculture, melding comics, fur, floaties and gender bending.

I'm left reeling with a pleasant confusion; a humbling feeling that as long as there's stuff out there that I don't understand, there's hope. And the source of my less-than-profound inspiration? Anthropomorphic comic animal inflation fetishists.

This is a scene, an artistic genre, an obsession where various harmless childish fantasies meet with deviant fetishes. There is an online fan-art scene centering around drawings of animal-human cartoon morphs known as 'furries'. People who identify as 'furries' usually have an original cartoon character to whom they relate, who stars in their fantasies and art. It might be a cartoon dog-boy, a rabbit, fox, cat or dragon (furries don't have to be literally furry) or an otherworldly beast, perhaps produced by adding wings to cat-girl or the even more fantastical. Some obvious sources of inspiration come from Disney, Warner Brothers cartoons, manga and Tolkien. The characters are usually hyper-cute, sexy or muscular. The anthropomorphism exaggerates the sexes, which may or may not correspond with the gender of the furry's human 'player'.



Come on in and join the squeaky goodness.

Furries often have their own website or contribute to the websites of others. There's a culture of drawing on request, producing mutual portraits, writing furry fiction and making much of it available for other fans for free online. It's a grand collaborative fantasy space where the fate of a furry may be left to the creative graces of strangers. When one furry artist uses another's furry character, a handwritten copyright notice is sometimes attached to the character identifying its player, and another to the overall piece.

Balloon Pup, a multi-tailed boy-puppy and self-identifying furry, explains the broader furry cultures, 'to some, furry is just an affinity to animals, especially anthropomorphic ones. They enjoy the art, movies, music, and everything else related to this. For others, furry is an entire lifestyle. They think, act and behave as their animal selves. Some even wish they could be changed to their animal form, and some even believe they're something trapped inside the body of a human'.

Katherine Gates, author of the book *Deviant Desires*, contends that a very high percentage of the furry scene (she also uses the term 'furverts' to distinguish those into furry sex art and practices) is comprised of gay men. She surmises that this may be 'partially because one of the original convention organisers was a gay man who promoted it to the general gay community'. She also notes that, 'several male furverts credit early sightings of Bugs Bunny in drag ... for their growing

awareness of their complex sexuality'.

Inflation fetishists are people who imagine sudden magical inflation of the bodies of themselves or their lovers. Inflate123's attempts to inflate himself with air in a \$US400 rubber catsuit haven't quite lived up to his fantasies and he finds the whole thing rather amusing. Mr Blowup, a British rubberist, combines his inflation fantasy with a rubber/latex fetish. His website (www.mrbowup.com) contains hundreds of photographs of himself and his wife in black latex inflatable costumes, which simultaneously seem ludicrous and a bit frightening. Imagine the cast of *Hellraiser* with their masks and clothes hooked up to nitrous tanks and you're half way there.

Inflation fetishes take many forms. See Katherine Gates' website (www.deviantdesires.com) for an introduction to macrophiles: people who fantasise about being tiny in a world of giants, or at the mercy of giant lovers; fat admirers, who fantasize about obese lovers; food consumption freaks, who like to eat to the point of feeling ill, or witness visible stomach expansion on others from over-consumption; then there are balloon fetishists or 'looners,' who simply like balloons, in and around their sexual partners, or just in and of themselves. (The looner scene is reputed to be hotly divided between 'poppers' and 'non-poppers'). The unifying theme between all these fetishes is that they all like to see something expand.

And incredibly, all these fetishes meet furrdom at a single place. 'Come on in and enjoy the squeaky goodness' it says, a reference to sound of friction between expanding cartoon body parts. This is Cerine's Furry Inflation Page (www.macrofile.com/~cerine). 'Welcome to the land of the balloons. Where, through magic, living stretchy beings have been created. Where a heart's desire can be solved by a dose of helium or a moment of great passion. Where reality can take a back seat'.

The cartoon characters here are usually inflatable animal dolls, semi-transparent with visible air valves, or otherwise made of cartoon flesh. But somehow they'll find a way to become hugely bloated by over-consumption, bovine growth hormones, or unwanted pregnancy to a larger beast, though most popularly from the prevalent helium tanks.

Nearly one hundred artists display their works here, and the styles are various.

A sketchy pen work by Klix shows two inflated animals, each with huge bellies, lying on either side of a multi-hosed helium canister in a cute parody of an opium den. In a delicate pencil drawing by Cerulean, a female centaur, with a human torso and horse's head, floats just above her centaur partner, while helium from a hose fills her now enormously inflated breasts. It sounds absurd, yet the artist has nevertheless captured a sensation of weightlessness and serenity.

It's not always pleasant for the inflated furries. Some of Alex Raccoon's pencil works involve intricate landscapes of Escher-like dimensions where inflated animals are just one element of a disturbingly fantastical scene, and cartoon creatures' smiles strain maniacally amongst the madness. There's class parody in one as a grotesquely inflated bear is bound and harnessed against its will as a floatation device for a fancy raft, while a happy family of 19th century aristocratic animals appear completely indifferent to its discomfort.

In a completely different style, Koneko Ryu makes tiny pixel-detail animations influenced by Commodore-64-era computer games where characters with air-guns or hand-pumps inflate and explode or capture their opponents by raising them off the ground like balloons. In another animation, a raccoon and lioness' respective bellies inflate for no apparent reason until they meet in the middle to the pleasure of them both.

In Striker's pencil sketches, the complicated geometry of superhero robot manga meets a sensuous bloat of over-abundant bellies and breasts. Stretch draws a jockey trapped beneath the bloated bottom of an enormous she-horse in his garish 2D computer art. A she-fox delightedly swells her belly with helium to many times her normal size, or pins a cat-boy to a tree with her belly enlarged from swallowing an inflatable dingy.

It gets kinkier. Axecat's muscled anthro-unicorns and lions are pictured in various poses of sexual domination over asexual plastic inflatable animals. A pen and coloured pencil sketch depicts a he-tiger (it's another furry, Johnny Blanco, whereas Axecat himself is an 'inflatable werecat pooltoy') wearing child floatation arm bands, sitting back contentedly with an erection on top of a grimacing inflatable alligator.

Words begin to fail me when I attempt to describe the works of Doug Winger. Certainly one of the most 'professional' looking artists on the scene, his works are



usually beautifully rendered to Disney-like perfection. Winger, who considers himself an outsider on the furry scene, is one of the few artists who chooses to depict as inflated what might seem like the most obvious for the uninitiated: the sex organs. He commonly draws cute and bespectacled giant she-puppies dominating bizarre, bloated and hermaphroditic orgy scenes, which almost outdo in grotesque oddity the notorious extremes of manga film.

Cut to a gentle meadow scene where a cute baby dinosaur is hugely but contentedly bloated after consuming a feast twice its size. This is the work of Momo and the most disturbing question is 'why?' The attractions to this genre are complex. There's an allure of the imagined tactile experience of expanding, or being squeezed by something tightly. Kathy Gates says, 'growth is both a metaphor for sexual arousal itself as well as a metaphor for power exchange... To imagine something growing [we regress to] the size we were when we were tiny children'. Gates expresses another motivation for furry in her deviant desires manifesto when she states that, 'we believe in actively participating in creating our own erotic entertainment, forging new art, original literature and fluid sexual identities. We believe in subverting mass culture for our own nefarious sexual purposes'.

The furry is a mechanism through which adults might continue to express some of the playfulness of childhood. The traditionally sexless cartoon animals of mass culture and childish fantasies are ripe for perversion and subversion, to be usurped in fantasy sex play, where even in breaking taboos they remain undeniably cute.

Many of Cerine's contributors seem fairly naïve of, or unimpressed with, the more traditional art scenes. Picasso as a bull was something of a furry himself, and once said he had to unlearn to express himself. Most of the artists here clearly don't have that problem. Their work connects directly with a part of their identity, full of nuances in ways which don't suffer from stylistic restraints. Their art is as much a part of the furry culture as devotional artwork is to a religion, except that the artists are creatively liberated rather than constrained. They are part of an evolving story line that crosses over into 'real' life... maybe more important than real life for some.

Some of the artists' names have been changed at their request.

Obliterating the frames

HAMISH GREEN reviews NS Curnow's new novel *Jericho Snow*, which bravely attempts to cauterise conceptions of creation and knowledge.

A world that had no lines, blurred lines and extremely defined lines all at the same time.

Jericho Snow, NS Curnow

[A] text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning;... we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach.

S/Z, Roland Barthes

I search endlessly for frames through which to read Melbourne writer NS Curnow's self-published novel *Jericho Snow*. But I am wrong to read the text as though it were a finite entity. This is perhaps the fifth time I have begun to write this review. I keep faltering. My critic hat is crumpled. There is no stable ground on which to steady myself. I take a break from words. Yet I cannot take a break from signs. I pace around my house, listening. And then I begin to remember.

Set in Australia in the 1970s, *Jericho Snow* is a novel that attempts to plunder the pantheistic conception of creation and the myth of original sin. A little girl becomes the conduit through which a snake, flagellated by a minister, speaks to the flat people of the dry town of Jericho. Evie Boden's task is to unveil the snake's whispery prophecies, formed as seemingly impenetrable aphorisms, which threaten to fracture the brittle beliefs

This is perhaps the fifth time I have begun to write this review. I keep faltering. My critic hat is crumpled.

of the townspeople and their tenuous ties with each other. These are prophecies that could come from the constructive god, the destructive devil, or eccentric Evie herself; prophecies that prove to peel matrices from matrices and mirrors from mirrors, within the text. Like onion skins. Curnow's matrices tangle and entrap understandings of creation and knowledge to expose their threadbare construction. The mirrors conceal and reveal the constructedness of character. The pages are awash with entrances.

Jericho Snow poises to obliterate the frames.

Curnow obliterates frames of knowing and seeing through melding a myriad of voices in his text. There are some outstanding moments. The manifestations of the snake's prophecies made me reel and gasp with wonder. Loxton Harris, the principal persona in the narrative, is Evie Boden's friend and witnesses her meeting with the snake. It is through Loxton's vision that the author sifts through 'a world that had no lines, blurred lines and extremely defined lines all at the same time'. The small boy whose untainted soul and body are indelibly open to the mysteries of the universe ('he felt the distortion that this wicked creation had become, and saw the cruelty of reality where life had to exist and exist without answers') is drawn deftly and complexly.

Occasionally the register employed is rough and discordant: 'sitting there the mother might have deconstructed the bush, first deleted the trees, then the dead wood and leaves and twigs which they'd strewn'. The eye of an editor might have wrangled the text free from its sabre-toothed copy-editing errors and smoothed its seams. Clumsy phrasing in the first third of the text appears to speak of gloss rather than subtlety. Sometimes Curnow fails to hear the rhythms inherent in the land with which he is working: 'the ground, the trees, the animals seemed to exist in a kind of constant that lived free from Jericho and its petty crazes – a Buddha like scene of creation and sustenance', resorting to unnecessary exoticisms. The end of the text is almost an easy *deus ex machina* and threatens to undo the work. The text's biggest problem is that it tries to tape together too many galaxies. It needs paring back.

The book is the work of a writer at the apex of agency.

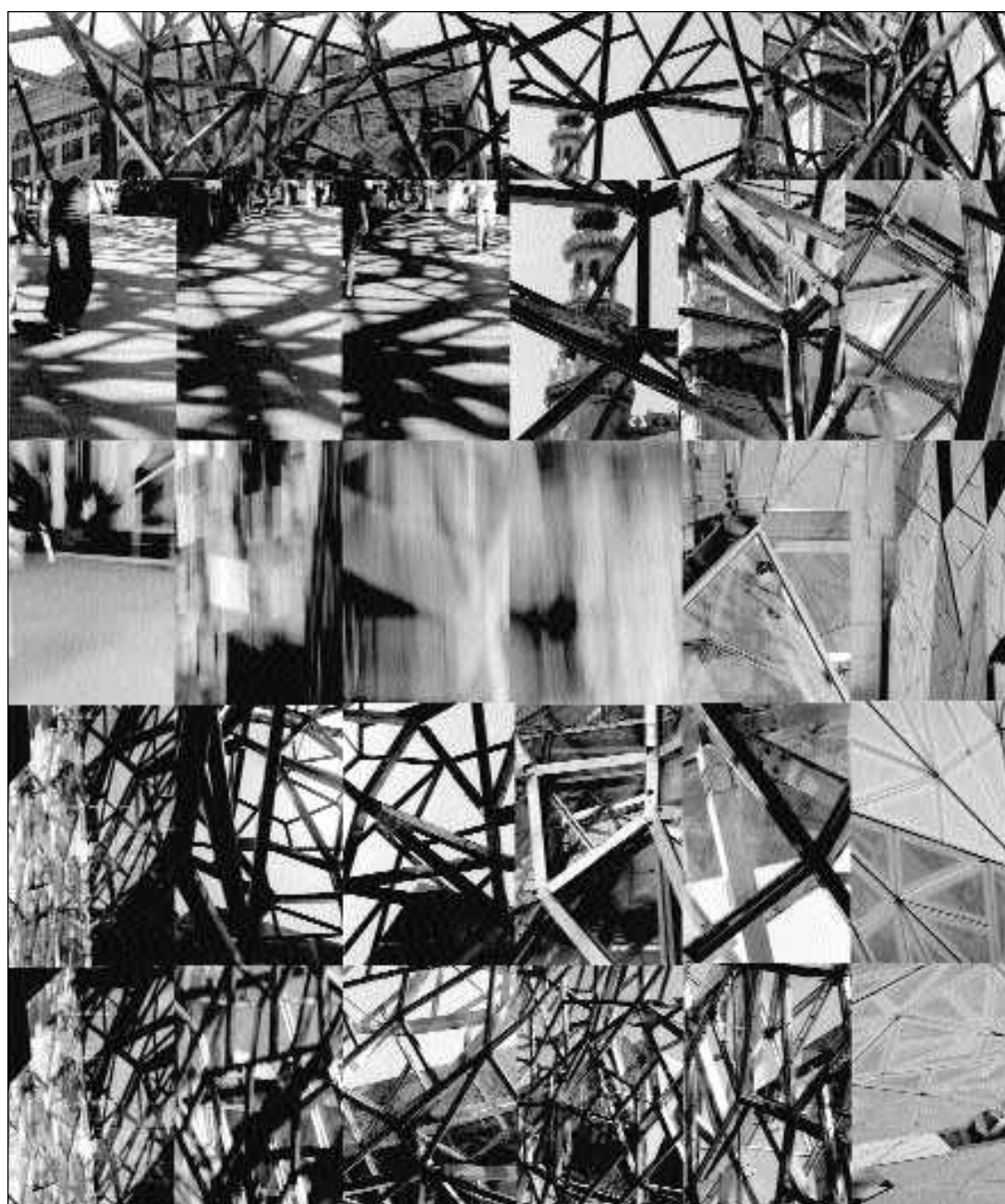
Writing on Euan Mitchell's *Feral Tracks* last year, arts writer Jane Sullivan conceded in *The Age* that self-publishing is a worthy exercise given the current state of publishing. Mainstream publishing is a paradigm where definitions of integrity have fallen askew. Last month Sullivan penned a killer feature, formidably citing Hillary McPhee: 'the budgets are so tight on books and so much

is loaded on to the book that editors aren't given sufficient time to work with authors. Development time is non-existent and structural editing is short-changed'. Marketing budgets have inflated. Quality forsaken. So what is the mission for an unusual, or emerging writer with lofty ideals? Sometimes the answer is self-publishing: a process through which a bold writer enables a researched audience to access their work, while ensuring that quality control is stringent. Self-publishing is the gesture of a writer at the apex of agency.

But I am reconstructing frames.

Regardless of the many processes through which a manuscript undergoes in order to appear as a green book with a black spine and twelve-point times new roman text, the wor(l)ds should stand for themselves. The work must stand for itself. *Jericho Snow* is a text that 'ha[s] no lines, blurred lines and extremely defined lines all at the same time'. It needs some more work. It's not a finished text. Too many entrances. Too many signifiers. Hazy signifieds. Critic puts crumpled hat back on for a prophetic finale: when it is finished, *Jericho Snow* will be extraordinary.

To obtain a copy of *Jericho Snow*, e-mail the author at nuromantics111@hotmail.com.



How did you find federation square??
interpretation of concrete by rahima



contribute articles, images, artworks and ideas to: artcult@thepaper.org.au

Twelve rusted pipes

JOHN CHUCKMAN

My head turned when I heard on the radio that a number of chemical warheads had been discovered in Iraq, the words chemical warheads evoking powerful suggestions and images. Shortly after first reports, one of President Bush's spokespeople termed it significant. Within a day, restraint was thrown to the wind, and Mr. Bush claimed the find was solid proof of Iraq's refusal to cooperate with arms inspectors.

I found a picture on the internet of the UN inspectors in chemical-protective suits with their discovery spread on the ground in front of them. The chemical warheads resembled twelve rusted, 8-inch pipes, exactly the kind of junk you could find strewn in yards piled with corroded '49 Ford transmissions, World War II relics, winches, and bedsprings on countless rural roads across America.

The "warheads" are the remains of 122mm Katyusha-style rockets (the same type of inaccurate and relatively ineffective small rockets used sporadically against northern Israel during the bloody occupation of Lebanon) that had been designed to deliver chemical weapons.

Of course, if you've been conditioned by Monty Python performances like former Secretary of Defence Cohen holding up a 5-pound bag of sugar on national television and asserting its volume represented all that was necessary to wipe out a country, you might still be concerned. His presentation came around the time when the seemingly custom-minted expression weapons of mass destruction was

introduced to blur the immense differences between chemical/biological weapons and nuclear ones.

To put the warhead discovery into perspective, some 20 000 such munitions were surrendered by Iraq after Desert Storm a dozen years ago. I have no idea how many artillery rounds and rockets, of 122mm and greater size, were fired by US forces during that brief war, but a hundred thousand is likely a modest estimate.

The American munitions weren't loaded with chemicals, but in their accuracy and destructive power plus the hideous after effects of tonnes of vaporised uranium left for civilians to breathe, they likely were far more lethal than the Iraqi rockets of twelve years ago could ever have been. I say this because such rockets have a very limited range and very poor accuracy. The chemicals they contain also are subject to such untoward events as sudden wind shifts blowing the stuff back onto your own troops. Moreover, any modern army is equipped to avoid contact with such material.

Even in mint condition and in the substantial numbers of

pre-Desert Storm days, such rockets represent a very limited threat. Any army general would trade them all for one American W-88 thermo-nuclear warhead with its guaranteed ability to obliterate instantly a city or an army and render a large area uninhabitable for weeks.

But of course, these weren't 20 000 new munitions; they were twelve rusted remnants containing nothing – threatening stuff indeed.

Iraq has experienced two furious conflicts over the last two decades. Undoubtedly, there is tonnes of rusted war material scattered over the landscape, stuff that no one has records of or cares about. And Iraqi's do have other things to occupy them, like sheer survival under America's

The American munitions weren't loaded with chemicals, but in their accuracy and destructive power plus the hideous after effects of tonnes of vaporised uranium left for civilians to breathe, they likely were far more lethal than the Iraqi rockets of twelve years ago could ever have been.

horrific embargo and with much of their country's basic infrastructure still in ruins.

Whether President Bush's statements reflect careless, off-

hand remarks or deliberate misrepresentations, they starkly highlight why he is neither trusted nor believed by millions of thoughtful people around the world. At his level of responsibility, and with the gravest consequences of war hinging on his words, it is reprehensible of him to twist language so that rusted pipes become proof of vast destructive plots.

Not long after the pipes discovery, there were revelations in London's Daily Telegraph and Times that three thousand pages of documents dealing with nuclear weapons had been found in the home of an Iraqi scientist.

producing fissile material that the entire world knows existed before Desert Storm, a costly project that according to Scott Ritter, former chief arms inspector, was destroyed by his technicians.

When I think of the situation in Iraq, I have the painful image of a huge scab that has just barely closed over a terrible, bloody wound. President Bush keeps telling us that rather than let the doctors keep the wound under examination, he wants to rip away the massive scab and slash still more deeply into the remaining flesh to make sure there is no infection.



Well, I have about the same trust in President Bush as surgeon as I do as statesman. Let UN experts carry on with inspections, and let the man who sniggered at souls waiting on death row keep his mouth closed until the full evidence is in.

www.YellowTimes.org

Radio Voice of Human Right in Indonesia

MARGIYONO

Though it is free from state control, Indonesia's independent radio has to fight against corporate domination. Radio Voice of Human Right (VHR) in Jakarta has been trying to build its own station despite legal restriction and corporate monopolies.

The new bill licences frequencies only for commercial broadcastings and state-owned Radio Republik Indonesia or RRI. Yet one businessperson in Jakarta owns four to five stations and frequencies, while RRI owns eight, some of which are off-air.

The monopolies started when Soeharto was in power for thirty-two years. The Ministry of Information, together with the Association of Private Broadcasting Radios, headed by the dictator's eldest daughter, Siti Hardijanti Rukmana, have been controlling private radio frequencies. Rukmana sold each frequency to her associates for less than AUS\$200 000 in the 90s, value multiplied to AUS\$660 000 today.

Panca was a reporter for Ramaco FM, Jakarta's famous station owned by Bambang

Rahmadi. Unable to express his ideas, Panca left Ramaco FM to build the VHR, along with director of Legal Aid Foundation Bambang Widjojanto and Munir, who was the chairperson of Committee Against Involuntary Disappearances and Violence.

"VHR's aim is to develop people's awareness on human right, democracy and social justice," he explained. According to Panca, radio is a powerful instrument, as people do not pay to enjoy broadcastings unlike newspapers and magazines.

VHR's activities are not merely reporting and producing news, but also organising trainings and workshops for Indonesian journalists. "We want journalists to know how to liberate themselves from military hegemony and owners' domination, so they can use their radio

to advocate community," Panca argued.

At the start, a commercial Kamajaya FM aired VHR's news and features everyday. VHR was awarded three months free-to-air as their programs sky rocketed ratings and generated more advertising for the station.

When VHR did not have additional money to pay airtime three months later, Jakarta News FM substituted Kamajaya FM at no cost. SBS Australia buys VHR features to be aired on its Bahasa Indonesia section. Money is also received from grants.

"We want journalists to know how to liberate themselves from military hegemony and owners' domination, so they can use their radio to advocate community." *Radio Voice of Human Right*

Collaboration with the station seems to give mutual benefit. VHR did not pay to air its news and opinions, and Jakarta News FM received generated advertising. However its cooperation endangered VHR's idealism. Norput Binoto, Jakarta News FM owner, often made some inter-

ventions.

"He cut our programs whenever he liked, without any agreement," said Panca sensitively. Binoto's habit provoked VHR to stop their cooperation and look for other stations to air their news and features.

Beside Bahana Pertiwi FM in Jakarta, some local stations air VHR news and features. In Aceh, Nikoya FM and Flamboy FM are its regular partners along with Trilolok FM in West Timor, Mayakara FM in East Java, SP FM in South Sulawesi and Top FM in Bali. Today, VHR also serves news

for a station in West Papua. Community radios seem to be prospective since Indonesia's new broadcasting bill permits them after more than three decades of outlawing. Under the former bill community radios were illegal and government often destroyed "illegal" stations,

while the owners were subject to thirty years penalty.

In November 2002 Indonesia's broadcasting laws changed. Growing political and business elites legalised new bills to defeat Soeharto's domination in broadcasting business. The new bill monitors broadcasting monopolies, albeit not friendly to independent radio. Commercial broadcasting will not air their programs nationally under the new bill. Also abolished was PRSSNI's authority to distribute frequencies. Indonesia's parliament plans to substitute it with Broadcasting Commission.

Panca thought the new bill would give opportunity to build a station for his radio. Unfortunately, the bill only gives air licence to commercial broadcasting. "Legally, we will pretend to be a company," he bared his trick, "but actually, VHR will be an association, under its members' control."

Margiyono is a journalist; involved in founding Independent Media Centre (Indymedia) Jakarta, and can be contacted at jakarta_raya@hotmail.com



PHOTOCOPY YOUR WAY TO HEAVEN

TUPPY MCINTOSH

Ah zines: little lollibags of reality. Thank Christ zines are primarily the domain of the open, the tweaked and the romantic, the dirty, the ignited and the lost. I mean if actors, for example, made zines, they'd be crammed with desperate posing and references to cameos in Water Rats. If actors made zines, zine fairs would inevitably birth a Golden Globe ceremony and the livers of all those attending would swell and explode upon the first fatty air kiss and no one would like it



"GET IN LINE YOU M@ F@"

and the event would be cancelled the following year. Yes sir, thank the lord Jesus, things are otherwise.

Last Saturday, 'Make It Up', Melbsies annual zine fair whooped it through its 3rd year. The hugs were sweaty and the kisses left wet marks upon the hundred or so zinesters and comic makers gathered atop the carpet at the Melbourne Town Hall. (Express Media, the non profit organisation behind the

event, would like to acknowledge that the aforementioned Town Hall is bunged atop the lands of the Wurundjeri people.)

A celebratory event open to the zine-star and the uninitiated alike, 'Make It Up' aims to serve as artists petrol. In true spirit of the equanimous creative, both the zine and comic workshops available were offered as gifts to encourage the virginal; with advice, guidance and tip-offs coming directly from the dangerously experienced. Interactive panels were also in action throughout the day, to salve and sublimate the frazzled inquisitor.

However, my unchallenged climax commenced within the rows of wares lovingly tended by their creators. Poking through the DIY stickers, punky comics and exhibition invites, matching up a publication you know and love with its maker (they never look like you thought they would), and marvelling at zines so laden with plant material customs officials would need therapy (one had a stick tied to each copy), can foster a curiosity and excitement powerfully akin to that raised by an 8 year old at the local showgrounds. The difference being that spending 10 bucks in small change at a zine fair will incite wondrous trips of A5 inspiration rather than the raw brutality of showbag sugar-tox. Thus, it is fact: zines are good for your teeth.

I managed to wrangle a copy of the I Hate Don Burke Inc.'s

seminal 'I hate Don Burke', signed by the big man himself. In a stunning display of synchronicity, 'I hate Don Burke' was celebrating its silver jubilee with its 4th edition (never let numerical sequencing get in the way of a catchy epithet). Of particular interest is its rollicking yarn about a couple of Aussie lads in Thailand hooking up with the great Don in a brothel.

Alice Ames, from zine store 'Sticky', produced a simple but gorgeous work of the delicacies of texture, language and print in 'frenzy- the raw edition'. An issue of Vanessa Berry's 'Laughter and the Sound of Teacups' represents almost every intricacy of her day on the 23rd of each month and has been produced since 1998. Conversely, I found Gala's 'International Sweetheart of Rhythm' in its first ever issue, offering a small window to her heart for a stranger to view: "come and watch me flail...trying to get by."

So, is the exposure of the our most spontaneous and crazy thoughts, via a photocopy of a strangers shopping

list, art? Who cares, as long as it makes you wonder. One of the panel discussions, entitled 'Stepping Stones Versus Subculture' was designed to quell the hackneyed opinion that, "zine makers and comic strip artists are exploiting their work and honing their writing and layout skills on their own publications, in order to use zines and comics as a stepping stone to a 'real' job in writing, music journalism or design." Certainly this issue would be raised on the agenda of many an industrialist zinester- the poverty line can really get you down. But

the nature of sustained creativity practically dictates that motivation extend beyond the superficial.

At the end of the day, each zine is simply a reflection of the intimacies of another human. At \$2.50, that's a bloody bargain.

Express Media will host a zine fair at the International Federation of Teachers of English Conference, held at Melbourne University from July 5-8th.



THE PLANET SPINS

LOUISA DISK PUNTS ON ONLINE COMMUNITY TO STRENGTHEN GLOBAL FAMILY

It's all good that we address our concerns for the environment and the state of society by direct actions such as composting, recycling, protesting, voluntary work and paid work of social benefit. But is it enough? Do these things challenge the system, the status quo enough? Do they provide alternatives? I don't know if I can survive much longer operating within the current system. I've come to feel that I need to do something more to effect real change in the world.

I feel more isolated each day from relationship with people other than my family and friends. I understand the concept of community but I have no experience of it. I see this illness of isolation in the world around me; people's heads and eyes down as you walk past them on the street; faces ignoring faces that pass each other each day; motorists in cars, oblivious to the world outside their leather interior; kids on the street that don't see you if they don't know you, and don't say sorry if you accidentally bump shoulders... you know it goes on. The signs are too obvious for me to ignore. The urgency to remedy this illness in my own life, and hopefully in the lives of others, is fertiliser for an idea that was planted two years ago when I was living overseas and was struck by the power of email as a medium.

Originally I had an idea to provide my friends and family with a common webmail service, to keep in close touch as we stretched ourselves around the planet. It would be managed by my partner and myself and it would provide a great alternative

to the big name email services. But I soon realised I wanted more than that. With a lack of centralised support for social and environmental endeavours (our society barely gives support enough to keep its citi-



FROGEY, LOU AND AL - THE HEADS BEHIND WEBSITE COMMUNITY

zens housed, fed and sane), lack of money, lack of time, and the prevailing notion and push from all directions of society to continue to be a productive, up-standing citizen, I realised I wanted help on a broader scale. I need the support of a community to be able to stand-up to these pressures, and to find creative solutions for the problems we are faced with. My travelling experiences of the last year have brought me to a point where I feel this pressing need to connect with all like minded people. I need to not have to pretend that my circle of friends and I are the only people in the world, I need to

not feel invisible anymore.

The desire for change and to build an alternative to the emptiness of city dwelling life; the need for global community; the burn to push the boundaries of the internet so that it can become not just means for sending letters but a medium for reinforcing and even establishing community; these are the motivations for building www.theplanetspins.com; a virtual sharehouse/drop-in center; a place for community to gather tools, a voice to call out to people all over the world and facilitate a global community.

The Planet Spins is:

- a place to connect; participate and learn
- a place to keep a diary for the community to stay in touch with your adventures wherever you may be;
- a place for you to keep track of your mates on the other side of the world;
- a place for the people you meet in your travels to stay in touch with you and a place for them to meet your other mates;

The Planet Spins offers:

- a webmail function you@theplanetspins.com;
- an opportunity to talk to other people in the global community via the forum (also great for organizing meetings with others)
- the opportunity to write/design/create and have your stuff published
- a resource of environmental activities, information and actions you can access, wherever you may be

The Planet Spins originated from a desire to commune with close and distant friends regardless of time and space constraints, and has since evolved to integrate the following, which we now find at the core of our motivation and life-structures:

- General living systems theory – revealing the self-organizing nature of reality and the presence of mind in nature;
- Deep ecology – retrieving us from anthropocentrism and calling us home to community with all beings;
- Gaia theory - showing our planet to be a living system and our larger body;
- Creation Spirituality and Liberation Theology;
- The resurgence of shamanic traditions;
- Ecofeminism – refiguring reality and the self in radically relational terms;
- Ecopsychology – questioning our acquiescence to the destruction of the world;
- The simple living movement – liberating people from patterns of consumption that do not reflect their needs;
- Music and art - expressing our interconnectedness and incorporating sounds and images from nature.
- The desire to incorporate all of this into our daily lives.

Give your community a voice, and link that voice with the voice of my community, and the voice of a distant friend's community, and hear us roar.



Clicks 'N' Cuts

TUPPY MCINTOSH & RAHIMA HAYES

[01 JAN 03]

CHILD LABOUR RAGES ON IN MALAWI

Child labour exists everywhere in Malawi, depriving the Malawian society of a skilled and educated workforce for the future and so perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

The Story Workshop, a local educational non governmental organization, has embarked on this fight through the production of an 18 episode radio soap opera called: Tilitonse Tisazunze Ana (Don't Ill-treat Children.) The radio opera takes the listener deep into the world of Malawi's working children.

These children have been forced into adult labour for a variety of reasons including poverty, the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on family life and the belief that education must come second to contributing to the family income.

Through the stories of a few of these working children, Tilitonse Tisazunze Ana! shows how damaging these practices are to Malawi's growing generation.

Listeners are introduced to a number of new adolescent youth characters whose stories are both a powerful and painful representation of the tragedy that have trapped many of the country's children in another generation of poverty.

www.peacelink.it/afrinews

[07 JAN 03]

LAOS PEDALS THE NET

To some, communication can be just as basic a need as food or water. This is evident in rural Laos, where an impoverished community has asked for help in establishing Internet access. Villages in the Plain of Jars, where bombings in the 1960s and 1970s separated families for decades, wish to reopen lines of communication with lost relatives as well as stimulate economic development by finding new markets for their wares. The project is by no means simple, as the region is without telephone lines and wired electricity and is subject to torrential rains for half the year and choking drought the other half. Volunteer experts from the Remote IT Village project are confident that "some pedal-powered generators, a few wireless antennas and some rugged, Linux-powered computers" will meet the task of bringing the digital age to this region.

www.wired.com

[21 JAN 03]

THE YOUTHS ARE ALRIGHT, SAY MALAYSIAN COPS

Responding to a complaint from the youth wing of the ruling United Malays National Party (Permuda-UMNO), police from a special "computer crimes" department entered the offices of web media "Malaysiakini" in Kuala Lumpur, interrogated several journalists present, and seized all of the company's computers, according to staff at the online paper.

Police Superintendent Mohamad Kamarrudin told the staff at the online paper that the computers would be held and searched for evidence in a possible sedition case to be brought against "Malaysiakini", according to sources at the company.

The complaint concerned a letter "Malaysiakini" published on 9 January. The letter, published anonymously, criticized the system of racial preferences that favors ethnic Malays in the country and also compared Pemuda-UMNO to the Ku Klux Klan in the United States.

If authorities decide to pursue a sedition charge against "Malaysiakini", the police could hold the company's computers indefinitely, making it difficult for the news organization to continue functioning, according to journalists at the paper. Sedition is punishable by up to three years' imprisonment; possession of seditious material is punishable by up to 18 months in prison.

Gan told reporters that the raid was an attempt to shut down "Malaysiakini". It was a matter of journalistic principle, he added, that the paper not reveal the identity of the letter writer.

The internet has become one of the only means for citizens to access independent news and opinion. While Prime Minister Mohamad's government exerts stringent controls over the print and broadcast media, the prime minister told reporters in 2000 that, "We have accepted that the Internet should be free. And we are not going to interfere."

"Malaysiakini" has filled a void for its readers, allowing them access to uncensored news and information since it went online in 1999. In recognition of his work with "Malaysiakini", editor Steven Gan received an International Press Freedom Award from CPJ in November 2000.

www.ifex.org



FRÖDO HAS FAILED

[14 JAN 03]

DIRTY DANCING

Peshawar, Pakistan -- Less than two months after a religious alliance assumed power in a conservative tribal region along the Afghan border, it is flexing its muscle through official decrees and vigilantism.

The six-party alliance known as the United Action Forum is now pressuring cable television operators to modify their content, in the latest attempt to reshape the social and political landscape of North West Frontier Province.

Last week, a group of 25 masked gunmen burst into the offices of Peshawar's OK Cable Network and opened fire, damaging \$13,700 worth of equipment.

Many mass media businesses have come under attack since the United Action Forum, or UAF, won a majority in elections last October, campaigning on promises to implement Islamic law and force an end to the U.S. presence in the province.

Almost immediately, the United Action Forum launched an ill-defined campaign against obscenity. First to fall victim were movie billboards, videocassettes and compact discs, confiscated from many local stores and burned by local security personnel and civilian supporters.

While U.S. networks like Home Box Office and Indian movies punctuated by sensual songs and dances remain highly popular among Pakistanis, those on the religious right brand such entertainment licentious and un-Islamic.

www.sfgate.com

[14 JAN 03]

RISKY LAKE DOES UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

DUBAI: Washington is working on several efforts to circumvent what it perceives as Arab government censors and provide the Arab public with direct access to American programming. The White House and Congress are considering creating a new satellite television channel to reach the Arab states.

This new channel would complement the Washington-financed Radio Sawa, which in March started broadcasting a mix of Arab and Western music intended for young people, along with an hourly dose of news from the official Washington perspective.

A former advertising executive is running a State Department campaign to sell America to Arabs through print and television advertising, photography exhibitions and videos.

www.iht.com

[23 JAN 03]

COURT OBLIGES NIKE TO TELL THE TRUTH, NIKE APPEALS

Pissed with the California Supreme Court, Nike has sought and won the right to appeal a decision that limits the corporation's right to free speech.

Back in 1998, Marc Kasky, a 57-year-old San Francisco man, sued Nike for false advertising. He said Nike was lying about its use of sweatshop labor.

Instead of proving its labor practices were legit, Nike fought for the right to free speech - that it

has the right to say whatever it wants to the consuming public. But California's high court, in a 4-3 decision, ruled there's a difference between the speech of an individual and a corporation - and corporations are obliged to avoid deceit in commercial speech.

www.adbusters.org

JOHN PILGER'S GREAT EYEWITNESS PHOTOGRAPHERS.

Renowned journalist John Pilger has worked with many photographers for over 30 years. This exhibition of over 200 photographs demonstrates how photo-journalism can show stories of people and events that may not otherwise be known.

With David Munro he exposed the killing fields of the Khmer Rouge; with Eric Piper he interviewed dissidents in Russia. 22 photographers are featured in this exhibition showing compelling stories from around the world.

Showing at the Melbourne Museum til the 10th of March.

LEICA/CCP DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

The fourth biennial Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award presents a survey of contemporary Australian documentary photography and is looking for entries.

So, if you are a documentary photographer, photo-journalist or photomedia artist and wouldn't say no to a camera and lens valued at over \$13,000, grab an entry form available on the web, entries close on April 1st.

www.ccp.org.au

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